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THE
BANDIT'S BRIDE;

OR,
THE MAID OF SAXONY.

A Romance.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF *MONTBRASIL ABBEY*, &c.

Thou hast torn me
From the dear arms of my lamenting friends,
From my soul's peace, and from my injur'd love,
* * * * *
And driv'n me to the brink of black despair.

ROWE.

VOL. IV.

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THE

BANDIT'S BRIDE.

CHAP. I.

ADELBERT, labouring with despair and horror, quitted the convent, and throwing himself into the carriage, retraced his interview with Rosalthe. He remembered every sentence she had uttered—he remembered every look, every sigh, every tear he had called forth. He cursed the impetuosity which had increased her affliction, and the suspicions his soul had dared to form.

“Had any other being but have breathed the hint,” he exclaimed, “his life should have paid the forfeit of his temerity. Oh, Rosalthe! suffering, injured excellence! could my eyes but behold the wretch who has torn thee from me—who, regardless of thy supplications, has violated the laws of honour and the sacred dictates of humanity, I would snap the heavy chain which binds thee to him; for my sword should efface from his cowardly heart every impression of thy beauty. I would dash the uplifted cup of bitterness from thy lips—I would, in spite of fate, possess thy snowy hand, and then laugh at adverse fortune. But, oh Heaven! would Rosalthe receive an assassin? Would she smile on the murderer of her husband? Would she——”

His reverie was broken by the carriage entering the court-yard of the castle; and, murmuring at the decrees of Providence, and the ceaseless sorrows of the world, he hastily sought the presence of his father.

A smile

A smile of joy irradiated the countenance of the Baron. An open letter lay on the table before him; and the strong expression of delight beaming from his eyes seemed to mock the melancholy and desponding feelings of the Count.

“Happy is the father,” exclaimed the Baron, “who contemplates the prosperity of his children—who sees his solicitude repaid, and his cares acknowledged—who, in their youth, retraces the past pleasures of his own, and witnesses the efforts of virtue!”

“What means my father?” enquired Adelbert.

The Baron pointed to the letter.

“In three days, my dear son,” he resumed, as Adelbert eagerly seized it, “my darling Angela will be restored to my arms; and if, through the *naïveté* with which it is penned, I can decipher the

lineaments of her heart, her brave escort, and your amiable friend, the Count de Lindenthal, has no longer left her his affection to guess at."

"Happy, happy Angela!" sighed Adelbert, perusing the letter.

"It seems long, my beloved father," wrote Angela, "since you quitted Dresden; and till I heard of your safe arrival at Lunenberg Castle, and the recovery of my dear brother, not even the Count de Lindenthal could reason me into composure. Every morning I looked anxiously for a letter, and every evening I cried myself to sleep. But even then I was not easy; for I dreamt of banditti, and murder, and death, and coffins, and every thing that was horrid and terrifying. Indeed, if suspense had lasted much longer, I believe I should have left Dresden, and found my way to the castle as well as I could. But
now

able, to spare the heart every unnecessary pang."

Adelbert sighed, and again returned to the letter.

"Now, my dear father, that so many miles separate us—now, that you cannot even see your Angela, or hear her, as she does every hour in the day call upon you, do not be displeased at her venturing to plead the cause of her beloved brother."

"A thousand thanks for thy affection, my sister," exclaimed Adelbert.

"How often have you told us, when conversing of our dear departed mother, that love is an involuntary passion! How often have you told us, that when once it possesses the soul, it ends but with existence! Think then, my father, what a melancholy prospect spreads itself before the eyes of Adelbert!"

"Oh

“ Oh God ! ” interrupted the Count, as a tear fell upon the paper.

The Baron looked anxiously towards him, and again he proceeded.

“ Think of the painful struggle between his duty and his affection—think of the matchless beauty, the virtues, the perfections of Rosalthe ! Let them preponderate against birth and fortune ; and surely, my father, happiness may be thrown into the scale. Permit Adelbert to give me a right to call her sister ; for long has my heart acknowledged her as such. The Count de Lindenthal visits us very frequently. I know not how it is, but when he is absent, I am always wishing for his return, and when he is present, I dread the moment for his quitting us. He seems to feel the same kind of prepossession ; for he often procrastinates his departure until it is so dark, that I am kept awake half the night by the fear of accident. Heigh ho ! I shall

be glad when we are once more settled at Lunenberg Castle; for then the same roof will shelter us all.

“ Ah! my dearest father, the Count has this moment left me. I am so happy, even though you are absent, I never felt such joy before. Never again will I think of the picture in the stone gallery at Lindenthal Castle—never think of any one thing to make me sigh: and yet, the Virgin preserve me! I never sighed so much in my life as I do at this moment; but they are very different sighs to what I breathed an hour ago. I would tell you all, but I cannot; for my heart beats, and my cheeks burn, and—and—and—I never felt so happy in my life. The Count Sigismar will accompany me to Lunenberg Castle in another week; and, encircled by the arms of a father and brother, not one wish will be left ungratified in the breast of

“ ANGELA.”

“ May

“ May thy happiness remain uninterrupted, my sister !” sighed Adélbért, folding the letter : “ may no unexpected occurrence blast thy opening prospects, or overcloud the anticipated hours of enjoyment ! For alas, how often does disappointment tread upon the heels of expectation ! how often does the fallacious rays of imaginary bliss close in despair ! Like the blue lightning attracted by the conductor’s point, hope clings to the delusive images of fancy, and expires not until every lambent spark is extinguished : and then, ah Heaven ! how deep, how dreary, is the darkness left behind !”

“ What meanest thou, my son ?” enquired the Baron ; “ for too sure thy labouring sighs forebode some unlooked-for calamity. Hast thou seen Rosalthe ? Hast thou breathed the tale of thy hopes, and does sorrow still possess thee ? Is she changed ? does she no longer love ? Say, Adélbért,” proudly pursued the Baron, “ does she reject thy alliance ?”

“ Ah no, my father,” replied the Count, “ Rosalthe is still the same. Her heart is unchanged, her affection is undiminished; but, like me, she is doomed to anguish. Fate seemingly delights to sport with our feelings; and ever and anon mocks us with the appearance of bliss, to plunge us deeper into sorrow.”

“ Is Rosalthe again missing?” asked the Baron. “ Explain thyself, Adelbert; for already has imagination conjured up a thousand strange and improbable stories.”

“ Rosalthe,” exclaimed the Count, in a voice of horror, “ is—married.”

The Baron started, and, grasping the arm of his son, gazed anxiously in his face; while Adelbert, trembling with agitation, rage, and despair, recapitulated the interview with Rosalthe, and then in silence awaited the comments of the Baron.

“ All gracious Heaven! strange inexplicable mystery! unhappy girl!” at length
4 ejaculated

ejaculated his father—"Thou must forget her, Adelbert—thou must yield to stern necessity, and withdraw."

"Never, never!" interrupted the Count; "a heart once impressed with the virtues of Rosalthe can never admit another object; her image will there ever remain engraven; and time, which softens the agony of woe, will augment the remembrance. Renounce her! no, my Lord! Sooner would I renounce existence. She is as superior to the rest of her sex as are the bright rays of the sun to the faint splendor of the planetary bodies: and when I, who have so long experienced its genial warmth, forswear its influence, may I be branded with the degrading appellation of ungrateful."

"What then is thy plan? what is thy pursuit?" enquired the Baron. "Rosalthe is married; and the woman who, from honour, refused clandestinely to receive thy hand, will never so far forget her principles,

ciples, as to listen to the vows of a lover."

"Was Rosalthe, by a word, by a look, to forget the chaste dictates of virtue," exclaimed the Count, "the spell would be broken, and my heart would cease to idolize; the chain, now firmly linked, would be dissolved, and freedom would once more be mine."

"In thy eyes Rosalthe cannot err," said the Baron; "love is the judge; and, as the basilisk, so strongly art thou infatuated by her charms, that her very failings are cherished by thee as virtues. Nay, even was she to renounce the ties which bind her—was she, in a moment of softened sensibility, to yield to the force of affection—thou wouldst, in her, justify what in another thou wouldst condemn. The dangerous sophistry will steal like poison into thy soul, and subvert all thy well-formed schemes of virtue. Shun temptation, Adelbert; visit not the convent;

vent; remember the weakness of human nature—remember the source of sin.”

“ Alas! my father, already has Rosalthe compelled me to bow to the decision—already has she forbade me her presence; and even at the moment when she withdrew her hand from my eager pressure, her tears refuted the accents of her lips. Once more I will behold her—once more I will visit St. Florensia, and sue for admission. I will kneel at her feet—I will gaze on her beauty, as doth the famished mendicant on relentless prosperity; and when subdued, when shrinking from her firmness, I rush from the convent, I will bid adieu to Saxony, and seek, in some new pursuit, the path to peace.”

“ And wilt thou leave us, my son?” enquired the Baron. “ Say, what pursuit will call thee from thy father—from thy sister?”

“ Alas! I know not,” replied the Count; “ fame is an empty bubble, which, forbidding content, bursts ere it is clasped—a hollow

hollow echo, a mere sound, which pleases the ear, and tempts us on to madness. If through the paths of war it leads us—if to the laurels of victory it points—what seas of blood, what groans, what shrieks must ensure it! Pleasure is as the beautiful tints of the wily serpent—pleasing to the eye, but poison to the sense. Mirth is a short delirium, transient as the lightning's flash, which expires as soon as seen. All the felicities of this world are deceitful—mere fairy scenes, which occupy the imagination, which mock us with promised bliss, and vanish.”

“And is love less mutable than other sublunary passions?” enquired the Baron. “Surely, Adelbert, if thou canst thus philosophize—if thou takest reason for thy guide, to conduct thee to the summit of thy meditations, thou mayest reconcile thyself to the disappointment—thou mayest, with contempt and scorn, look down upon the shining but perishable attractions of life, and bless the all-wise Creator
of

of heaven and earth, who has given thee a heart to shun their allurements."

"Alas! my dearest father, I am not more than mortal," sighed the Count.

"Then screen thy heart, and spare Rosalthe the pangs of a second interview," rejoined the Baron: "self-denial is the basis of morality; it places a voluntary restraint upon the turbulence of our passions, and sacrifices, for the benefit of our fellow-creatures, our own immediate pleasure. Indeed, my son, I am not wrong in affirming, that the duties of a Christian cannot be discharged, unless this virtue is often exercised. It is not then for thy sake, but for the sake of Rosalthe, I urge the request. Wilt thou, Adelbert, who, for her safety, for her welfare, would risk thy life—wilt thou not in this instance preserve thy generosity?"

"Alas! my father, how difficult is the task!" replied Adelbert.

"Then the more exalted is the virtue," interrupted the Baron. "Say (and he affectionately

affectionately pressed his hand), wilt thou, on these terms, secure the peace of mind of Rosalthe?"

"Ah! if I thought her peace of mind could be thus secured," exclaimed Adelbert, "not the power of tyranny, not the dread of death itself, should restrain me. But Rosalthe, my father, echoes every sigh my bursting heart sends forth—Rosalthe is doomed to sorrow; and in the gloom of a monastery retraces past hours, and sinks beneath the pressure of woe."

"The performance of her duty, and the silent approbation of her heart, can alone ensure it," rejoined the Baron. "Time meliorates the heaviest afflictions, and soothes the woe-worn bosom into rest—time robs even death of its sting, and reconciles us to the unchangeable decrees of Providence."

Adelbert sighed—his eyes were directed towards the letter.

"I will

“ I will stay to receive my sister,” he said, “ and then I will leave the castle.”

“ Alas! upon earth must our happiness ever remain incomplete?” sighed the Baron. “ In the acquisition of a darling daughter, I shall lose an equally beloved son. Yet (perceiving concern depicted on the features of Adelbert) think not I would restrain thy wishes—think not, for my own gratification, I would for a moment defer thy departure. Go, my unhappy boy; and in change of scene may thy sorrows be forgotten—may thy heart be restored to peace! My prayers shall ever attend thy absence, as my cares have done thy presence: and may the Power, in whose hands thy life is placed, eternally watch over and guard thee.”

“ It is for thy sake, my father, as well as for my own, that I fly from Saxony; for here my steps would intuitively wander to St. Florensia, and my eyes would seek to penetrate its walls: the horrors of melancholy would ensue, for Rosalthe—

“ Chaste,

“ Chaste, pure as unsunned snows,
And fair in every point of character”—

would deny my eager solicitations for admittance; and I feel I could not endure the restraints of her severity. The force of memory is so strong, that every note of joy is dead to my ear; and here my woes can feel no period. I will go: in distance I will cease to think of the abyss into which I have fallen, from the very bosom of happiness—I will cease to think of my past felicity, or at least I will cease to compare it to the misery of my present situation—I will visit the gloomy haunts, the unfrequented recesses of human misery—I will familiarize my ear to the plaint of sorrow; and if, through me, the woe-worn heart should dilate with joy—if, through me, the widow's eye should sparkle, and the orphan's anguish cease—I will cherish the boon of charity, and pour her blessings upon suffering humanity—I will thankfully acknowledge that
the

the school of affliction has corrected the past errors of my life; and thank the all-gracious Power we adore, that in making me the instrument of his mercy, he has given me a heart to sympathize in sorrow, a head to conceive an adequate method of relief, and the power to pursue it with success."

"Go, my son," said the Baron, as in rapture he strained him to his bosom; "go, and follow the tract thou hast made: and in this world mayst thou experience an earnest of that felicity, which benevolence never fails to enjoy hereafter!—Go, and glean from thy own heart the recompence of virtue. The barrier which obstructs thy happiness may yet be broken; and Rosalthe, the angel thy heart sighs after, the reward thou hast so fondly pictured, may yet be thine."

Adelbert raised his eyes to heaven, and hope, new and unlooked for, sprung in his bosom. A prayer quivered on his lips,

lips, for the fulfilment of his father's prediction ; and when, in the darkness of night, he laid his head on the pillow, he no longer ruminated on the past vicissitudes of his fortune, but peopled life's future scenes with the gay images of anticipation.

Rosalthe, decked as an angel of peace, smiled upon his efforts ; and when all but imagination slept, seemed to whisper, in a tender, soul-soothing voice—"Await patiently, oh Adelbert! the events of destiny ; and resign thyself unerring to the will of Heaven !"

At length came the day, which was to close upon the arrival of Angela. The Baron, with that anxious impatience ever attendant on parental affection, marked the hours as they fled ; and as the shades of night contracted the landscape, he gazed on the far-spreading road, and endeavoured to penetrate the mists of distance.

ance. Often did he sink in disappointment at the deceptions of fancy—often did the sounds wafted by the passing breeze reach his heart, and then die away in uninteresting echoes.

The moon slowly arose from the liquid bosom of the Baltic, and shed her mild rays on the face of nature; while the waves, as though proud of the luminous reflection, swelled in awful uniformity, and broke sullenly upon the pebbled shore. Still did the Baron preserve his station at the window—still were his eyes fixed upon the prospect, until every idea but of its sublimity and beauty, died within him.

“Alas!” he exclaimed, as he gazed upon the scattered stars which twinkled in the cloudless firmament, “how many, in the gay, licentious pursuit of pleasure, pass through life without contemplating the grandeur of creation—without for a moment

moment retiring within themselves, or breathing, in pious thanksgiving, their gratitude to God! How many waste the precious hours of existence in idleness! How many pass them in sin! If thou wouldst, oh man! yield to reflection—if thou wouldst contrast the moments passed in inactivity, with those employed in expanding thy understanding, exalting thy virtues, and cultivating thy faculties, how wouldst thou stand reprov'd—how wouldst thou shrink abashed! No longer wouldst thou complain of the transient scenes of the world—no longer murmur at this fleeting state of probation: for thou wouldst ever remember, that as the glass of time dwindles, so does the sands of existence become exhausted.”

The sound of a carriage now broke the silence that reigned, and dissipated the reflections of the Baron. Disappointment no more awaited him; for the castle gate was thrown open, and the wheels rumbled
over

over the stones of the court-yard. He rushed from the window; he flew down the staircase; and reached the hall door in time to clasp Angela to his heart, on her alighting.

“ My darling child ! ” he exclaimed, as he kissed her glowing cheek, “ thank Heaven thou art returned ! ”

“ How is Rosalthe ? how is the Lady Abbess ? how are all the dear sisters of St. Florensia ? ” enquired Angela ; “ and Dusseldorf ? and the dame Agatha ? and Viola ? and —— ”

The Baron patted her cheek, and she flew to embrace her brother.

“ What have I done, ” said the Count de Lindenthal, smiling at her vehemence, “ to be excluded from the general salute ? ”

“ Nay, ” replied Angela, “ if you had remained at the castle, you might —— ”

She

She hesitated and blushed.

“Complete your sentence,” said Sigismar, taking her hand; “say, what might I have done?”

“You might——” repeated Angela, and again she paused.

“It is a fair challenge,” said the Baron, laughing.

De Lindenthal seized the inuendo; and a faint smile enlightened the pensive features of Adelbert.

The glowing tinge which painted the face and bosom of Angela—the tremulous emotion which obviously thrilled the heart of Sigismar, betrayed to the knowledge of the Baron the mutual tenderness they had inspired. He looked affectionately from them to Adelbert, and a tear stole down his cheek. Ah! love, how often dost thou declare thy own secrets!—how often dost thou lead to thy own conviction! The
veil

veil beneath which thou shrinketh is of too delicate a texture, thy subterfuge too apparent, to elude even the eye of indifference.

Adelbert beheld the agitation of his father, and sighed ; while Angela, withdrawing her hand from the Count, quitted the apartment. She visited every chamber in the castle ; she spoke to every domestic in her father's establishment. Humility glowed around her heart—condescension marked her conduct. She was known, to be loved ; loved, to be respected—for her dignity, tempered with mildness, ever quelled the advances of ignorance, by repressing the familiarity which her uncommon vivacity might call forth.

Followed by the housekeeper, she entered the dressing-room, in which the portrait of her mother was suspended ; and having in silence dropped a tributary tear to her memory, enquired of Viola the par-

ticulars of her brother's late alarming indisposition. Unused to the restraint of concealment, Viola recapitulated the fatal event which had destroyed the peace of her young lord, and entered fully into the mysterious disappearance of the unfortunate Rosalthe.

"Holy Mary!" ejaculated Angela, bursting into tears; "my beloved friend! my dear suffering Rosalthe!"

"Do not weep, my lady," implored Viola; "all now is well; for my Lord the Count is recovered, and your friend is in safety at the Convent of St. Florensia."

"Where has she been concealed?—who tore her from the cottage?—what has she suffered?"—eagerly questioned Angela.

"Alas! I know not," replied Viola; "I only know, that about ten days since, Dusseldorf visited the castle, for the purpose of announcing the joyful news of her return; and since that period the health of the Count has been recovering, although his

his spirits seem oppressed with melancholy."

Angela, dejected and uneasy, returned to the sitting-room. She wished to enquire the particulars of the strange incident which had befallen Rosalthe; but she knew not how to begin. She perceived a listless despondency pervade the countenance of Adelbert, and a thoughtful seriousness hung upon the features of her father. She gazed upon them until every vestige of cheerfulness vanished from her brow—until her head sunk mournfully upon her arm, and the gay scenes of Dresden, the enlivening pictures of happiness, faded from her imagination.

"Why so pensive, my dear child?" enquired the Baron.

Angela started.

“What might be the subject of your reflections,” asked Sigismar.

“The vicissitudes of life,” replied Angela, forcing a faint smile.

Adelbert looked anxiously towards her:

“It is an abstruse study,” observed the Count de Lindenthal, “and surely accords not with the charming volatility of the Lady Angela’s spirits.”

“The mysterious occurrence which has so recently happened to my dearest Rosalthe,” resumed Angela, turning to Sigismar, “warrants the consideration.”

Adelbert, springing from his chair, paced the apartment with wild and disordered steps; while the Baron, looking significantly at his daughter, placed his finger on his lips as a token of silence.

“Who told the tale?” questioned Adelbert,

bert, pausing, and taking the hand of his sister.

“ Viola, in compliance with my solicitations,” replied Angela; “ but why art thou thus distressed, my dear brother? Rosalthe is in safety; and fate, propitious to your wishes, smiles, on approaching happiness.”

“ Did Viola inform thee thus?” asked Adelbert.

“ She did,” returned Angela.

“ Then believe her not,” rejoined her brother: “ Rosalthe is in safety at the Convent of St. Florensia; but I am wretched, and time cannot restore me peace.”

He rushed hastily from their presence; and the Baron, to solve the doubts of Angela, and the Count de Lindenthal, retraced the events which, from the summit of expectation, had hurled the agitated Adelbert into despair.

Sigismar sympathized in the disappoint-

ment of his friend ; whilst Angela wept at the sorrows of Rosalthe. Long was it ere composure was restored ; and when separating for the night, they retired to their several chambers, Angela mused on the sufferings of the adopted daughter of Dusseldorf, until sleep, the balmy restorer of our wearied senses, the valuable gift of all-bounteous Nature, weighed down her eyelids, and soothed her into peace.

Long and calm were the hours of oblivion. Fatigue rocked the cradle of repose ; and night, the dreary chasm in creation, rolled down the gulph of time, and marked not a single record on the tablet of memory.

In the morning, Angela, with a heart throbbing with friendly commiseration, repaired to the Convent of St. Florensia. She pressed the faded form of Rosalthe to her bosom—she sighed at the ravages affliction had made—she gazed upon her
pallid

pallid cheek, till the tears of regret stole from her eye—till the sob of sorrow struggled against suppression. The worm of grief had successfully banquetted on the roses—had banished the once glowing tints of health, which bloomed unrivalled in the *Bandit's Bride*. But a soft languor, veiling in its stead her pensive features, impressed them with a benignity almost celestial.

Rosalthe was silent—her heart was too full for utterance—she could only recline upon the bosom of Angela, and weep.

“Come, this must not be,” said her compassionate friend, endeavouring to recover composure; “I came to comfort, not distress you.”

“Comfort! Holy Virgin!” sobbed Rosalthe, “talk not of comfort; you know not what I have endured since last we parted.”

“Think of the future, not the past, my
c 4 beloved

beloved Rosalthe," said Angela, striving to rally her spirits; "a retrospective view is often painful: henceforth the perspective shall be the focus for our eyes."

"Alas! in whatever point it may be presented, to me it must be dreary," articulated Rosalthe.

"I thought you would have made so many enquiries about Dresden—my pursuits and engagements—the Count de Lindenthal—and various other things," exclaimed Angela, "that I came prepared with a vast deal of intelligence. But sorry am I to find, my dear Rosalthe, you are not at all like me, abundantly versed in curiosity, a true daughter of mother Eve."

Rosalthe forced a smile, but a tear quickly succeeded.

"The Count de Lindenthal," resumed Angela, deeply blushing, "is at the castle; and——"

The

The entrance of the Lady Abbess prevented the conclusion of the sentence. She sprung from the encircling arm of Rosalthe, and again threw herself on the bosom of the superior—I say *again*, for already had Angela, light as the aerial form of the sylph, and swift as its fabled motions, in search of Rosalthe, visited every corner of the convent, and warmly returned the salutations of the holy sisterhood.

“My dear child,” enquired the Abbess, smiling at her fervour, and tenderly kissing her cheek, “art thou come to commence noviciate, to fulfil the project which thy letter implied? or, has the gay allurements of Dresden dissipated the pious determination, and claimed thy heart for its own?”

“No, that I am sure it has not,” replied Angela, “for I did not find Dresden half so charming as I had imagined.”

“Then thou art come to live with us,”

pursued the superior, looking archly at Rosalthe, "to seek for peace within this holy dwelling—to follow the religious vocation of a nun?"

"Not for the world," eagerly exclaimed Angela.

"If disappointment," rejoined the Abbess, "awaited thee at Dresden, tell me what new occurrence has subverted thy resolves?"

"Often hast thou said, holy mother," faltered Angela, deeply blushing, and her eyes bent upon the ground, "that to give unnecessary pain was a flagrant breach of the sacred laws of humanity."

"Who then would experience pain from the sacrifice?" demanded the superior.

"My father and brother," replied the confused Angela.

"And who else?" questioned the Abbess; "for thou hadst both father and brother at Dresden; consequently the same reasons existed."

"The Count de Lindenthal," articulated
3 Angela,

Angela, hiding her blushing face on the bosom of Rosalthe.

“ Ah daughter ! daughter ! ” resumed the superior, “ will not the pang which passes through the heart of De Lindenthal rankle in thy own ? ”

“ Mother ! ” ejaculated Angela, looking anxiously towards the Abbess.

“ Think not, my child, to conceal the delusion,” gravely pursued the superior ; “ that letter, penned in the simplicity of innocence, betrayed the secret : love’s dangerous sophistry has stolen into thy bosom, and will colour the aspect of thy future days.”

“ With happiness, I trust,” sighed Rosalthe.

“ Heaven grant it ! ” ejaculated the Abbess.

Angela was still silent ; but her silence was eloquent ; for her sparkling eyes seemed to declare the implicit reliance

she placed on the fulfilment of the wish expressed by Rosalthe.

“Thy heart has not lost the sanguine warmth of anticipation, my daughter,” continued the Abbess, perusing, in the lineaments of Angela’s expressive countenance, the ideas passing in her mind. “Experience will alone confirm my words—experience will yet bring conviction to thy heart, and convince thee, that through life the hours of hope are sweet to the soul as rest to the body. They alone point to the shadow happiness; they alone lead us on in the pursuit, and vanish in the moment of possession.”

Rosalthe sighed, but Angela shook her head with an air of incredulity.

The clock struck one. Two hours had already elapsed since Angela had entered the convent. She arose to depart, and
taking

taking an affectionate farewell of the Lady Abbess and Rosalthe, entered the carriage, and returned to the castle.

CHAP. II.

“THE first fifteen years of my existence passed in innocence and happiness,” said sister Josepha, as her eyes rested on the pensive features of Rosalthe. “In the Chapel of St. Florensia, at the foot of the broken altär, like thee, I poured forth my early prayers—like thee, I imbibed the rudiments of virtue. But vanity was the master passion of my soul. My parents, blinded by affection, saw not its increas-
ing

ing influence; and as I gazed upon the snowy whiteness of my bosom, upon the carnation tinge on my cheeks, my foolish heart sighed at the lone situation of our dwelling. Ah, would to Heaven I had been buried from the sight of man! Ah, would to Heaven my boasted charms had faded! Then might my path have been honour, my resting-place peace. But the pangs of remorse are come upon me, the lustre of mine eyes are dimmed by the tears of penitence; the lily and the rose are withered, but the thorn still rankles in my heart."

Rosalthe sighed, and pressed with tender concern the sallow hand of the Magdalen.

"To thee, my daughter," pursued the nun, "who knoweth so well the excellence of my parents—who hast thyself experienced the affection of Dusseldorf, the tenderness of Agatha—how dark, how inexcusable

excusable must appear the ingratitude of the wretched Jacquilina! Yet condemn her not; remember that thou thyself art a frail mortal—that human nature is weak—that man is the serpent of deceit—that woman is the daughter of Eve; remember that vanity, like a vile incendiary, lurked in my heart, and betrayed my fame to ruin.

“It was in the autumn of the year, when the trees, scorched by the refulgent rays of the sun, were tinged with a thousand variegated hues—when the lap of bounteous Nature opened her golden stores to the industrious husbandman—when calmness and serenity reigned around—when every pious heart was raised in gratitude to the bountiful Distributor of plenty—that I quitted the cottage, and hastened to the chapel of St. Florensia. I knelt at the shrine; and my hand, then white as the polished marble, grasped the iron railing. Oppressed with the intense heat of the weather, I threw aside my bonnet, and
combed

combed back the dark ringlets which flowed in profusion on my bosom. I gazed eagerly around, for a sound seemed to proceed from the sacristy; but no object met my eyes; and breathing a deep sigh, I murmured the word *Solitude*, and soon returned to the cottage.

“ On the following morning I again repaired to the chapel, and with astonishment beheld laying on the step of the broken altar, a portrait so exactly resembling myself, that it was impossible to misconstrue the design. Gratified at this tribute paid to my beauty by an unknown hand, I sighed to behold the painter; and while yet my eyes, sparkling with delight, rested on the performance, a tall and elegant stranger, whose form was faultless as his manners were impressive, stood before me.

‘ Thou hast found my lost treasure,’ he exclaimed, gazing earnestly on my glowing features; ‘ wilt thou, lovely representative, restore it to me?’

“ I looked

“ I looked fearfully towards him, and a transient blush dyed my face and bosom.

‘ Ah, how vain are the efforts to paint thy varying charms!’ he continued, with a fervour which ought to have alarmed me; ‘ a thousand loves lie lurking in thy dimpled cheek, and defy every attempt of the pencil.’

“ I smiled—he seized my hand.

‘ Restore the precious portrait,’ he exclaimed; ‘ again let it press upon my heart—again, insensible to my vows, let it smilingly receive my eager kisses.’

“ I would have shrunk from him; I would have withdrawn my hand.

‘ Do not fly me,’ he continued; ‘ believe not the tender softness of those features. Thou art innocent as the daughters of Chastity; thy eyes are more bright than the radiant star of Evening; and thy breath, oh peerless maid, is

—— “ Like a sweet wind,
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour.”

‘ I must

‘ I must go,’ I exclaimed, as the portrait dropped from my hand; ‘ indeed I can stay no longer.’

“ He eagerly snatched it—‘ Come, celestial image,’ he said, ‘ be more kind than the severely cruel original; come to my heart, and there for ever harbour: cheer me in the lone hours of night, when sleepless, restless, and dejected, imagination will retrace this interview, and turn my days to sadness.’

“ The air of his countenance was so melancholy, the tone of his voice so impressive, that I involuntarily stopt as I reached the nave of the chapel. Alas! I believed every syllable he uttered. The poison was slow, but it was consuming. He traced in my tearful eye the strength of romantic sensibility, and saw that my guileless heart would sink an easy victim to his wiles. I forgot the precepts of my father, the cautions of my mother—I forgot that the vows of man were dangerous, that his ways, as those of a benighted traveller over the waste,

waste, are hard to be discerned. I forgot that repentance is the result of precipitance; that the rash, the credulous, are often betrayed into evil.

‘Stay yet a moment,’ he implored, regaining my hand; ‘tell me where thou dwellest, that I may sometimes, when sleep weighs down thy eyelids, and innocence and peace fans with their soothing images thy downy slumbers, gaze upon the dwelling which contains thee, and fill the passing breeze with my desponding sighs.’

‘In yon cottage,’ I exclaimed, as I quitted the ruin, ‘upon which the golden sunbeams now linger.’

‘Gracious Heaven! a cottage!’ he repeated, with an appearance of surprise; ‘fate is unjust, for thy perfections would grace a palace.’

‘There was I born,’ I resumed, faintly sighing; ‘and there, with my father and mother, do I reside.’

‘And what is the name of the happy father of such a daughter?’ he enquired.

‘Dusseldorf,’ I answered.

‘And

‘And thy own, angelic maid?’ he demanded.

‘I blushinglly replied—‘Jacquilina.’

‘Say, sweet Jacquilina,’ he rejoined, ‘when again wilt thou visit the chapel?’

‘I don’t know—perhaps not at all. Why shouldst thou wish to know?’

‘I hesitated.

‘Because there I shall kneel, and offer up my prayers,’ he replied; ‘and if thou wert there, Jacquilina, we would pray together.’

‘Oh no, we should not.’

‘Why?’

‘Thou wouldst talk to me as thou hast done to-day; and then—and then—’

‘What then?’ interrupting me.

‘I should forget to pray.’

‘I faltered and blushed.

‘Sweet simplicity!’ he exclaimed: ‘but wilt thou not sometimes think of me, Jacquilina? If thou knewest how long the moments will seem until I again behold thee, thou wouldst be more merciful.’

‘Blessed

‘Blessed Mary! yonder is my father: now I must go; for if he should see me talking to a strange gentleman, he would chide, and keep me at the cottage.’

‘Promise to meet me at the chapel to-morrow evening, or I will attend thee to the gate.’

‘Holy Heaven! what, in sight of my father!’

‘Yes, Jacquilina, in sight of fifty fathers’

‘Let go my hand: see, see, he is turning this way.’

‘Why dost thou tremble, Jacquilina? dost thou fear him?’

‘No; but I love him. He is always kind, tender, affectionate; and for the world would I not offend him.’

‘Promise to meet me then, or I will rush to his feet, and tell him that I dearly, madly love his daughter.’

‘Ah, no, thou wouldst not.’

‘By Heaven I would.’

‘Nay,

‘Nay, do not swear; for then I shall be afraid of thee.’

‘Say, then, wilt thou meet me?’

‘Go, go, I will.’

“He rushed into the forest, and I slowly joined my father.

‘Where hast thou been, my child?’ said my unsuspecting parent. ‘Come, give me thy arm; for I have left my stick at home, and thou shalt be my support.’

“For the first time I buried my confusion beneath the artful veil of concealment; and with apparent ease replied—
‘To the chapel.’

‘What, to pray for thy old father, Jacquilina? Blessings on thee! thou wert always a dear good girl, and he never will forget thee.’

“I shrunk at the deception I had used—a burning blush dyed my cheeks, and a tear trembled in my eye. Ah! would to Heaven I had followed the impulse of the moment! Would to Heaven I had thrown myself

myself on his bosom, and acknowledged my first step to vice! But the image of the too fascinating stranger arose to my imagination; and the dread of never again beholding him subdued every other consideration. I walked slowly by the side of my father, and returned thoughtful to the cottage.

“When the hour of repose arrived—when my parents, unconscious of what was passing in my heart, slumbered in security, I leant from my opened casement. I looked anxiously towards the ruin—I reflected on the romantic occurrence of the evening—‘Perhaps,’ I exclaimed, as a heavy sigh swelled my bosom, ‘oh, unhappy stranger! thou art at this moment gazing on the senseless portrait—art thinking of Jacquilina; perhaps art looking forward to to-morrow’s eve, with an impatience which love alone can feel. I do not love, and yet I wish the hour was arrived.’

“I gazed on the image which the looking-

ing-glass reflected—I marked well my features, my form, my complexion—I thought of the compliments which the stranger had paid me—I looked again, and in the vanity of my heart, acknowledged them a just tribute to my beauty. ‘*Fate has been unjust,*’ I exclaimed; ‘*my perfections would grace a palace.*’ I felt dissatisfied; and when I sunk to rest, dreamt of rank, splendor, happiness.

“The sun had scarce ‘come dancing o’er the eastern hill,’ when I arose and repaired eagerly to the chapel. I passed a full hour in reflecting on the Baron.”

“The Baron!” repeated Rosalthe, anxiously looking towards her, “say, sister, what Baron?”

“Pardon me,” rejoined the nun; “even from thee I would conceal the name of my betrayer.”

“Was it the Baron de Lunenberg?” again interrogated Rosalthe.

“Ah

“ Ah no,” replied Jacquilina, “ Heaven knows it was not.”

Rosalthe remained silent, and the nun with a sigh proceeded :

“ And, shall I acknowledge it? I returned to the cottage without performing my accustomed devotion. In the evening, true to my appointment, I again visited the ruin ; and from that period not a day elapsed without witnessing our stolen interviews. In a little week, anxiety’s corrosive worm was stationed in my breast ; for my foolish, my too credulous heart, was gone an age in love. I thought of naught but my seducer ; and alas ! I thought of him, till father, mother, sunk in the comparison. I lived but in his presence—I knew no other happiness. My charmed heart listened to his tale ; persuasion dwelt upon his tongue ; and every word was believed. He loved me with a

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passion which sought to triumph over every law, human and divine—with a passion which sought only its own gratification. I loved him with a tenderness which would have sacrificed even life for his welfare—with an unsuspecting affection, which never in idea questioned his honour; nor until he had robbed me of peace, virtue, fame, did the delusion vanish.

“ Oh that those who now totter on the fearful brink of ruin—who perceive not, through the glowing flowers on the surface, the horrid gulph which yawns beneath—would listen to the voice of experience, would attend to a wretched being, whom it has taught wisdom! Then would not ‘scorn point her finger at them’—then would not sorrow abide for ever in their hearts. Arrayed in the pure, the radiant garments of chastity, they might defy the taunts of malice, the blasts of slander. But alas! when once they swerve from the rigid rules of virtue, ignominy, shame, contempt,

contempt, pour their baneful influence on their devoted heads, and bend them to remorse and woe.

“ I will not attempt to describe the long and studied assiduities of the Baron, or the various casts of character he assumed in the performance of his part. Suffice it to say, he gained my promise to accompany him to Dresden—to quit my tender, indulgent parents—to quit every scene which virtue, honour, gratitude, ought to have endeared. My heart, elated with the prospect of gratified pride, magnificence, homage, I should there receive, felt but a transient regret in the moment of separation; and when I reached the chapel, the spontaneous tear which trembled in my eye was presently dissipated by the Baron's protestations of love—the ardent, enthusiastic vows of eternal constancy, which at my feet he poured forth.

‘ Jacquilina,’ he exclaimed, folding me to his bosom, ‘ what proof wilt thou give me of thy affection ?’

D 2

‘ Alas!’

‘Alas!’ I murmured, ‘what for thee am I about to renounce?’

‘Ever shall the remembrance dwell in my heart,’ he replied; ‘ever shall I think of thy unequalled mercy—ever seek to express the poor tribute of my gratitude at the shrine of love. But come, the carriage awaits; the moments, envious of my felicity, pass swiftly away. Hasten, my Jacquilina; and may the career of our affection end but with existence.’

“Ah! why did my guardian angel, heedless of his charge, slumber? Why did he not awaken from his long, long trance, and snatch from the impending gulph of ruin the wavering Jacquilina? I trembled—I hung weeping on the arm of the Baron. He smiled at my apprehensions, he chided my tears. I shrunk from him—I sunk on the step of the broken altar—I dared to raise my eyes to Heaven—I dared to murmur a supplication for returning favour.

‘Farewell,’ said my betrayer, in mourn-
ful

ful accents; 'Jacquilina no longer loves—Jacquilina decrees that we part. Farewell for ever.'

"I uttered a kind of shriek. I started from my knees.

'Jacquilina, until she beheld thee,' I murmured, 'was happy.'

'Say, inexplicable but too lovely girl, what am I to hope?' he interrogated; 'tell me at once my fate. Life hangs upon thy lips; for if thou sayest we part, maddened with despair, I may commit a deed, at which thy soul would tremble. Speak, Jacquilina. Wait another moment, and I am gone.'

'Live, live,' I faltered, extending my hand towards him.

"He raised me from my kneeling posture. He would have conveyed me from the ruin; but again I struggled.

'My father! my mother! Ah, holy Virgin! my parents!' I ejaculated; 'never, never shall I behold them more.'

'Dost thou still hesitate?' said the Ba-

ron, relinquishing my hand; 'relentless, inexorable Jacquilina! my love cannot be requited; for Heaven itself would I renounce for thee. Return then to thy duty—cherish thy parents—leave me to my fate. In the cold grave I will bury my sorrows, and seek shelter from thy perfidy.'

'Moment of agony!' I exclaimed, supporting myself against the shrine of St. Florensia.

"He threw himself at my feet; he mingled his tears with mine; he clasped my hands; he pressed them to his heart—to his lips.

'Look with an eye of pity on thy lover, Jacquilina. I will be father, mother, all, to thee. Tell me that my fears are groundless—tell me that thy heart returns my passion; for never can I possess thy hate and live. Whither wouldst thou go?' seeing my eyes directed to the entrance of the chapel.

'Alas! I know not.'

'To

‘To thy cottage?’

‘And leave thee to die? Oh no.’

‘With me? say, wilt thou, Jacquilina?’

“I answered not. His arm encircled my waist, and unresisting he hastened me from the ruin. In a moment I was seated in the carriage which awaited us, with the Baron at my side. The door was scarcely closed, when a confused noise reached my ear. My name was pronounced in accents of horror—the voice vibrated to my heart. I looked from the window—I beheld my poor, distracted, aged father, rushing towards us. I extended my arms—I loudly shrieked—the carriage drove furiously away—and I sunk fainting on the bosom of the Baron.

“Long was it ere the lambent pulse of life began to beat—long was it ere memory recalled the certainty of my situation. I looked fearfully around: the scenes of my infancy could no longer be discerned; the chapel, the cottage, the convent, were lost in distance. I thought

of my father, of my mother, until every other idea was forgotten—until tears of anguish streamed down my cheeks, and sighs of regret burst from my heart. Even the beloved, the tender accents of my seducer failed in their effect; and I resigned myself to unavailing sorrow, to fruitless lamentations. The noise and bustle of Dresden—the grandeur of my new abode—the unabating affection of my lover—the splendour of dress—the allurements of equipage—the charm of novelty—the incense of admiration—soon awakened the dormant seeds of vanity in my breast, and subdued every softer emotion. The humble scenes of youth were obliterated, or at least effaced by the all-powerful influence of dissipation. I gloried in the effects of my beauty; and with gratification and delight heard the coteremporaries of the Baron point him out as an object of envy. The Count de Altenwaltz, the intimate and trusted friend of my lover, poured the soft tale of his passion in my ear, and acknowledged

acknowledged himself an unresisting captive to my charms; but ever did I turn disgusted from the incense of his flattery—ever constant, firmly attached to the being who had lured me from virtue, did I remain.

“ Early in the spring, when the pale primrose blossomed, and the odoriferous violet scented the passing gale, we quitted Dresden, and the Baron conveyed me to the princely mansion of his ancestors. There, in the silent gloom of Gothic grandeur, did my heart retrace the past actions of my life—there did it sigh for my deserted parents, and throb at the fearful lapse of honour. Melancholy tinged my enthusiastic soul, and sorrow bent my labouring spirit. Often for hours would I listen to the monotonous roar of the rolling Elbe—often wish that its mighty waters could wash away the stain of guilt, or plunge me into the calm, still lap of oblivion. But alas! whole years of repentance, whole years of contrition, were

stored up for me ; for the measure of my transgressions was not yet filled. There did a living witness of my shame first open his eyes to the light of Heaven—there did I gaze upon the opprobrious offspring of illicit love, with an aching fondness which defies the powers of description.

“ My tender son, my darling Ludovic, forcibly recalled to memory the past actions of my disobedience ; and every smile which dimpled his infant cheek, aimed a dagger at the heart of his self-condemned mother.

“ Ere yet my boy could lisp the name of FATHER, the Baron urged me to quit the castle. . He thought that its gloomy retirement increased the dejection of my spirits. He sighed to see me happy—to see me smile upon his love, and cheerfully receive his attentions. Alas ! he suspected not the load of woe which weighed so heavy on my breast—he suspected not the strong struggle of returning virtue, which shrunk terrified at the depth of infamy
into

into which I had fallen. I yielded to his desire ; for ever was his wish my law ; and arrived at a new and elegant villa, two days journey from the castle, in time to give to his arms a lovely innocent daughter.

“ Often have I hung over this child of unhallowed love, this dear unconscious offspring of frailty, till pity mingled with my sensations. I thought of her defenceless state—I thought of the slender claims she had upon her father’s affection—I thought of my own blasted fame—and trembled at the future prospects of my daughter. I dared to give her the name of Agatha—I dared to call her after the blessed saint I had deserted, in the hope that, shuddering at my misconduct, she would shun the path of vice, and, following the tract of innocence, imbibe with the name the virtues of my too indulgent mother.

“ The Baron frequently for whole weeks left the villa ; but his affection appeared

unchanged ; for his manners were alike impressive and tender. Various were the pleas which he urged for his departure ; but at his return, he would deplore the necessity for his absence, and gaze upon our children with the eyes of parental affection.

“ At the expiration of a year from my removal from the castle, the Count de Altenwaltz arrived with the Baron on a visit at the villa. One evening, as I sat with my angel Agatha on my knee, and my little Ludovic sporting playfully in the corner of the apartment, the Count entered, and seated himself by my side.— ‘ Sweet cherub !’ he exclaimed, stooping to caress the infant ; ‘ tender miniature of thy too lovely mother ! Ah, would to Heaven I could convince her of the injuries she every hour receives ! would to Heaven she would suffer me to snatch her from a being who appreciates not her perfections !’

“ Offended at his eager gaze, and the
ardent

ardent warmth of his manner, I arose to quit the chamber.

‘Nay, why art thou thus displeased, beautiful Jacquilina?’ he continued, forcibly seizing my hand; ‘the same splendor, the same state shall be thine: thou shalt inhabit the magnificent mansion of my ancestors; and no subterfuge, no idle tale, shall drive thee thence.’

‘What meanest thou, my Lord?’ I enquired.

‘Dost thou not know my allusion?’ rejoined the Count; ‘dost thou not know from whence the frequent absences of the Baron proceed?’

‘Ah, no! explain thyself; for already does my heart sicken at the dread foreboding.’

“My cheek turned pale; my whole form trembled; jealousy darted her scorpion fangs in my heart; and my arms could scarce support my little Agatha, who reclined in innocence on my bosom.

‘The Baron, lovely, injured Jacquilina,’
pursued

pursued the Count, 'no longer singles thee from the rest of the world—no longer pays thy charms, thy nameless perfections, the deference of an undivided affection. No, heedless of thy virgin fame, by him polluted—heedless of thy artless love, thy unabating constancy—he has espoused the daughter of a powerful nobleman, who, at the castle where thou once reigned an undisputed mistress, now gives birth to a son, a darling heir to his vast domains. Look at the youthful Ludovic—look at the little cherub now slumbering on thy bosom—reflect upon their injuries—let Nature work within thee—let her turn thy love to hatred, thy faith into revenge.'

“Scarce did the last accents reach my ear; a thick mist rolled before my eyes, and a condensed and heavy sensation, as at the approach of death, chilled my heart. Suddenly the faint shriek of my Agatha, whom my arms could no longer support, restored animation. I snatched her from the ground, upon which she had fallen, and

and stifled her cries with my eager kisses. The Count threw his arm around my waist: he attempted to console me; but horror-struck, I shrunk from him, and precipitately rushed from the apartment. But alas! my darling Agatha had received an injury, which, though the skilful eye of the surgeon could not discern, affected her health, robbed her cheeks of their roses, and filled her desponding mother with despair.

“ In a short month, left to the anguish of my own reflections (for the Baron and the Count had quitted the villa), I hung over my drooping child. I watched each change of her countenance, and supplicated Heaven to spare her to me: but little did avail the prayers of a guilty being like myself; my Agatha, born in sorrow, conceived in sin, fell a yielding victim to a slow decline, and breathed her last sigh, like a saint, on my bosom.

“ Alas! Rosalthe, it is in vain to attempt
a descrip-

a description of the distracted state of my feelings. I accused myself of her murder—I hung over her shrouded form—I wept, I groaned, I tore my hair—I yielded to all the wild extravagance of insanity. Suddenly, Hope's soft ray of heaven-born mercy cheered my distracted bosom; and seemed to whisper pardon was held forth to the contrite sinner. A placid smile, emanating the bright unfading glory of celestial bliss, was stamped on the stiffened features of my departed angel, and spoke a language, to which, till then, my heart had been a stranger. It spoke the language of repentance—it pointed out the path of religion, of forbearance, of remorse—it whispered to my soul the blessed words of our Creator, and taught me to offer atonement to Heaven for the laws I had already violated. I sunk on my knees—I raised my clasped hands, my streaming eyes—I offered, at the throne of grace, the compunctions of a breaking heart :

heart: the sacrifice was accepted, for the still calm of melancholy succeeded the frantic lamentations of despair.

“ As, for the last time, I kissed the pallid lips of my lost Agatha—while yet the priest, in sacred vestments, awaited, and the cold grave yawned to receive her—I vowed, as the first great effort, to break every tie this world held dear—to tear myself from all I loved—from the Baron—from my little Ludovic: to retire, in the warmth and vigour of youth, unsought after and unknown, to the calm retreat of my innocence, to the Convent of St. Florenzia: there, hid from the parents I had disgraced—from the lover I had renounced—from the child I had deserted—to pass the remaining years of my life in forbearance, austerity, and woe.

“ Three days after the grave had closed on my departed cherub, I wrote a pathetic letter to the Baron, informing him of my design, but carefully concealing the retirement I had chosen. I reproached him
not

not for the injuries I had sustained: ah no! I accused my own heart, and acquitted him of all but love. I implored him to forget me, or at least to suffer not the remembrance to embitter his peace. I recommended my little Ludovic to his protection, to his paternal care, and besought him, as the last and dearest request of his fondly cherished Jacquilina, to transfer the affection he had ever expressed for the mother, to her deserted offspring.

“ But the task—the last, the bitter, the agonizing task, was yet unfinished. Nature revolted at the effort it was about to make. I strained my remaining darling with maddened fervour to my bleeding heart. For a moment resolution wavered, and maternal tenderness prevailed.—‘ Can I not take thee with me, my boy?’ I exclaimed, moistening his rosy cheek with my tears; ‘ can I not retire to some obscure solitude, and, renouncing thy too fatally loved father, live alone for thee?’

“ Short was the struggle. I remembered
the

the injury he must have sustained in a removal from the Baron's protection—I remembered he had no legal claim upon a father's affection, and that the ties of nature were frequently subverted by those of art—I remembered that poverty, wretchedness, and sorrow, were the only inheritance he could receive from his ill-fated mother; and that in whatever corner she might conceal her guilty head, the voice of calumny would point her out, would raise the blush of shame on her conscious cheek.

‘I must tear myself from thee, my son,’ I exclaimed; ‘offended Heaven and thy benefit demands the sacrifice. But, oh God! none but a mother can feel my fondness—can feel my pangs at the renunciation of a darling child! None but a mother can conceive the grief, the anguish of a mother: it is a woe, it is an agony, at which the youthful heart cannot guess.’

“The hour of separation arrived. I took a last sad kiss of my beloved Ludovic; and
supplicating

supplicating the all-seeing Power, which had worked my conversion, to protect him, fled precipitately from the villa.

“Painful and tedious was my journey; and when I reached the plain upon which stood the peaceful cottage of my parents, every wound bled afresh. I longed to return to the bosom of innocence; to throw myself at their feet, a humble suppliant for their pardon. But I remembered my guilt—I remembered my parents’ honour, and shuddered at the fearful contrast. I gazed on the ruined chapel, which had witnessed the conflict between my virtue and my love, till every object swam before my sight, and darkness and horror alone remained.

‘At the foot of that altar,’ I murmured, ‘the scene of all my sorrows, will I yearly perform a severe penance, there, on the anniversary of the day which tore me from my parents, will I kneel the long night through, and pour forth the fervent prayers of repentance.’

“I buried

“ I buried the name of Jacquilina in that of Josepha ; and, save to the ear of the Lady Abbess, and my confessor, never did I breathe the tale of my wrongs.

“ I commenced my noviciate, but not until I had informed the superior of the severe penance I had awarded to my crimes. For a time, she sought to change my resolution, to alarm me by the dangers which might attend my nocturnal visit : but I resisted her rhetoric ; I combated all her arguments ; and adhered to the determination I had formed, that on this, and only this, condition, would I receive the veil.

“ In those dark ages, when the chapel flourished in its pristine grandeur, a subterranean passage, leading from thence to the convent, was the conveyance through which the cloistered devotees, escaping the gaze of intruders, reached the seat of their midnight rites, the shrine of their tutelary saint. This passage was well known to the Abbess ; and by her it was imparted to me

as a safer path for the performance of my vow. It opened with a kind of door, or square stone, at the side of the shrine; and so judiciously was it constructed, that the most scrutinizing eye could not have discovered the deception.

“ Twenty times have I visited the chapel, Rosalthe; twenty times have I performed my anniversary duty. There, as I knelt, the impetuous night of your disappearance—while the thunder rolled, and the lightning played—while the heavy rain beat through the broken arches, I preserved my station. An awe, but not a fear, possessed my soul, and bent it to its mighty Maker.

“ In the pauses of the wind, a murmur reached my ear—a human voice addressed me. I turned hastily round, and recognized, in the dripping figure before me, notwithstanding the lapse of years, and the furrows of sorrow, my dear, dishonoured, neglected father. In the wild impulse of
the

the moment, I started from my knees; I uttered a stifled shriek, and fled through the chapel.

“Scarce had my agitation subsided, scarce had I recovered composure, and again pressed the stony step of the altar, when the sound as of some one stumbling over a loose fragment of stone, dissipated the momentary stillness which prevailed, and filled me with the dread of discovery. More securely to conceal myself, I extinguished my light; and soon, from the wild and energetic solicitations of the intruder, learnt the mysterious tale of your disappearance—learnt that he was no other than the Count Adelbert de Lunenberg.

“With difficulty I smothered my sobs—with difficulty I concealed my participation in his sorrows. He knelt on the step I had quitted, and called *the omnipotent Creator of Nature to witness his vow, never to plight his faith to any other than Rosalthe, nor ever to know quiet whilst her fate was involved in mystery.*

‘Thy

'Thy vow is registered in heaven,' I exclaimed, and a heavy silence succeeded.

“First he implored, then he upbraided the being, who, hiding herself in darkness, appeared to sport with his misery: but the fear of being known repressed the dictates of compassion which urged a reply; and I answered not.

“As the opening dawn peeped from the east, I retreated through the concealed door, and returned for another year to the convent. Alarmed at the information I had gained respecting your departure, I repaired to the cell of the Lady Abbess; but her slumber was so serene, so peaceful, that I feared to break it—I feared to plunge her from contentment into anguish. I gazed on her for some moments, and then quitted the cell without her awaking.

“Early in the morning, my blessed father performed the dreaded task; and thy fate, my daughter, was deplored throughout the sisterhood.

“And now, Rosalthe, that thou hast
heard

heard my story," pursued the nun, "tell me whether I dare kneel at the feet of my parents? whether I may hope for pardon? whether my crime admits of grace? whether my soul may picture Heaven?"

"Yes, yes," articulated Rosalthe, throwing her arms round the neck of Jacquilina; "Heaven surely has heard thy prayers; and for thy parents, they will receive and bless thee."

"Dusseldorf and Agatha are come to see thee, my child," said the Abbess, entering the chamber.

Jacquilina started, and hid her face in her hands.

"The moment is come," whispered Rosalthe; "exert thy fortitude, my sister; man's life is short; defer not then the hour of bliss; I will precede thee, and announce the glad tidings to thy parents' love."

"Ah, God!" murmured Jacquilina, sti-

fling her sobs on the bosom of the Abbess.

“Come, my daughter,” said the superior, pressing the hand of the desponding nun; “one little effort is alone required: come, I will accompany thee, and my arm shall support thy steps.”

Rosalthe hastened to the parlour. In the joy which awaited her foster parents, she forgot her own sorrows. Her sparkling eyes betrayed some new, some unexpected emotion.

“What means my child?” enquired the dame, looking eagerly in her face.

“Say, Rosalthe,” interrupted Dusseldorf, “what may we presage?”

“Rapture, bliss, my dearest father,” she replied, throwing her arms round his neck, and kissing his furrowed cheek.

“Art thou then happy, my darling?” questioned Agatha: “may the Count Adelbert——”

“Hush,

“Hush, hush, my mother,” faintly articulated Rosalthe; “bliss, great and exquisite, will yet be thine; but not from the source thy warm heart pictures.”

“Then can it not reach me,” sighed the dame; “once, one other source was mine, but that is closed for ever.”

“Heaven is all-sufficient!” exclaimed Rosalthe.

“Hah! what meanest thou?” enquired the agitated Dusseldorf: “say, what of our child? what of our lost Jacquilina?”

“Jacquilina!” faintly repeated Agatha.

“Lives,” articulated Rosalthe; “lives a humble penitent, a pious sister of St. Florensia’s cloister. But see, she comes—forgive her, oh forgive her, my more than parents.”

Supported by the arm of the Lady Abbess, pale, trembling, and dismayed, Jacquilina entered the parlour. She sprung forward—she threw herself at the feet of

her parents—she fixed her streaming eyes upon them—she uplifted her clasped hands. Agatha folded her to her heart.

“ Without an end, without a rival, a mother’s fondness lives,” murmured the superior; while Dusseldorf, sinking on his knees, raised his eyes to Heaven.—“ Almighty Power, I thank thee,” he piously ejaculated; “ receive the prayers of a Magdalen; let her tears wash away the stains of guilt, and pour into her contrite heart the healing balm of thy mercy.”

CHAP. III.

THREE months had elapsed since Rosalthe's return to the convent; but alas! the still calm of security restored not the peace which one dreadful act had banished. She drooped in secret; no loud exclamations of regret escaped her lips, no complaints, no murmurs: she looked like "Patience on a monument smiling at grief." Her spirits fled, her cheeks grew pale; her eyes lost their lustre; the energies of her mind appeared condensed with sorrow; for, like a lily battered by the storm, she seemed to yield an easy victim to premature decay.

The Lady Abbess, the now serene Jacquilina, the anxious cottagers, and the friendly, affectionate Angela, with dismay beheld the threatened danger. They strove to rouse her mind from reflection, to open to her a fresh field for hope ; but vain were their efforts, vain were their endeavours. The whole produce of Father Anselmo's laboratory was essayed without effect; for alas! medicine cannot reach a wounded spirit; and the lacerated heart can alone receive the lenitive balm through the medium of sympathizing regard.

Rosalthe frequently struggled with dejection for the sake of her anxious friends; but momentary was the effort, momentary was the glance of cheerfulness: she remembered herself the *Bandit's Bride*; and like the face of Nature in the month of April, now cheered by an enlivening sunbeam, now obscured by a passing shower, her smile was followed by a tear. Often in the still hours of night, when repose
fled

fled her eyelids, when sorrow and regret pressed heavy on her heart, would the form of the 'disconsolate Adelbert present itself to her imagination, decked in all the charms of manly beauty—often would his voice, when, at the foot of the broken altar, he breathed the warm fervour of his vows, reverberate to her ear, "sweet as the shepherd's pipe upon the mountain."

"Thou Power supreme!" she would ejaculate, "thou, who art ever present, not circumscribed by time, not confined to space, watch over his dreary path, guard him from threatened danger, shield him from despair, cheer him in the lone hours of melancholy, soothe him in the moments of woe: and for me, all-gracious Providence, give me strength to kiss unrepining the chastening rod of thy mercy!"

The Baron de Lunenberg, deeply interested in the fate of Rosalthe, frequently accompanied his daughter to St. Florensia.

Shocked at the faded form of the unfortunate and still lovely orphan, he fancied that change of scene might be conducive to a recovery, and strongly proposed a removal to the castle, which the Lady Abbess, clinging to every ray of hope, eagerly seconded. But Rosalthe trembled at the suggestion, and rejected it as teeming with danger.

“ Ah no,” she murmured ; “ here will I fulfil my destiny ; here, beneath this sacred roof, will I await the return of peace, or, yielding to Fate’s stern mandate, renounce my hopes of happiness.”

“ Thy fears are erroneous, Rosalthe,” said the Baron ; “ thy security would be as great within the strong walls of the castle as in St. Florensia’s cloister. Trust me, my dear child (for so even now will I call thee) the arm of force cannot enter—can never tear thee thence. Come, Angela, come, holy mother, join with me in removing our young friend’s objections.

No

No intruder will we admit to our society (pursued the Baron); Adelbert is now at Vienna, and mentions not his return; the Count de Lindenthal yesterday left us to visit his father. Shall I tell for what purpose, Angela?" looking archly at her blushing cheek.

She smiled.

"Here are only friends," he continued; say, my daughter, shall I whisper the secret?"

"I feared, in a recital of my happy prospect, to have offered an insult to the feelings of Rosalthe," articulated Angela, "or believe me it would not thus long have remained one."

"Well, now that I have permission," resumed the Baron, gazing tenderly on his child, "it seems that the grave, sedate, sentimental Count de Lindenthal has fancied himself in love with yon little mad-cap, nay, has even persuaded her to ac-
E 5 knowledge

knowledge the same predilection; the consequence is, he is gone to consult his father, and I am in a fair way of losing my daughter. Is not the fact truly stated?"

"Losing me!" repeated Angela, throwing her arms around the neck of the Baron; "no, my dearest father, never."

"Well, well, 'tis pretty near the same thing," he rejoined, chasing a parental tear from his cheek; "but if it is for thy welfare, Heaven knows I shall not murmur."

"Not a doubt can be entertained of it," ardently exclaimed Angela; "I shall be so happy! Every summer I shall pass with you at Lunenberg Castle, and every winter you will be with me. How then can you be said to lose me?"

"Blessed moments of unclouded bliss!" said the Baron, gazing tenderly on her glowing features; "rapturous hours of unsophisticated happiness! May thy warm heart, my darling child, never acknowledge hope a delusion! May it ever be led on
by

by the fairy scenes of fancy, and close but with the last expiring breath of existence!"

"Thank you, thank you, my father," interrupted Angela; while Rosalthe, unable to suppress her tears, turned her head to conceal them.

"And so, my daughter," said the Abbess, smiling, "you resign all ideas of taking the vow?"

"Oh no, indeed, my dear mother, I do not," quickly replied Angela; "I merely exchange one vow for another, but no less binding, believe me; for instead of vowing to live and die in the Convent of St. Florensia, I shall vow to honour and obey the Count de Lindenthal, so long as life shall last."

"May you ever find it a grateful task," said the superior.

"Oh, that I am sure I ever shall," resumed Angela; "for now the greatest happiness I have is to give him pleasure; and never did affection meet with a more ample

return. My heart cannot lose the deep impression it has received; and Sigismar declares I have taken such strong possession of his, as to render it impossible for any influence ever to diminish: and so you see, holy mother, I shall soon have it in my power to confute the words you have often used—to convince you that perfect and uninterrupted bliss is to be attained even by us mortals.”

“So you thought, Angela,” replied the Abbess, “when you quitted us, to visit Dresden; but you acknowledged yourself to have been mistaken. No, my too sanguine child, believe one who has trod in the path of experience, expect not perfect happiness in this sublunary state; but be satisfied, nay even grateful, if you can find content. Let the Count, when he shall have become your husband, ever be your confidant, ever be your dearest friend; yet, even then, fancy not that uninterrupted peace will ensue from this union.”

“Mother!” exclaimed Angela.

“I know

“ I know what I say, my daughter,” resumed the superior, smiling at her earnestness; “ the happiest marriages are not without their contradictions and disagreements: I have been a wife, and I have felt the fatal truths of what I warn you. Patience and softness are the only weapons in the hands of woman; the one disarms resentment, the other retains man in his duty; for creation’s proud lords, pardon me (bowing to the Baron), are naturally despotic, are naturally prone to liberty and pleasure: yet they expect, nay they insist, that both by woman should be renounced. It is our place to yield, Angela—content to know their established rights, without presuming to examine the foundation.”

“ Heavens, what a picture!” ejaculated Angela, looking anxiously at her father.

“ It is even so,” pursued the Abbess; “ and yet peace may be expected. In the wife, lose not sight of the mistress; but let the behaviour which attracted the lover
be

be ever experienced by the husband. Gratitude will then ensue; and what emotion is more powerful in a feeling heart? The native garb of innocence is cheerfulness: let virtue, therefore, be decked in smiles; for be assured the unerring way to please is ever to keep in view the methods of giving pleasure."

"Methinks it should be studied by both parties though," observed Angela.

"No doubt it will," replied the Abbess.

"Why then," interrupted Angela, "we *must* be happy."

"And happy I trust thou wilt be," said the Baron, rising to depart; "and so shall we all, if Rosalthe will but yield to our plans: indeed, my dear child, taking her hand, and affectionately pressing it, "we cannot quit the convent, unless thou wilt accompany us."

Rosalthe hesitated; but the solicitations of the Baron and Angela, joined by the over-

over-ruling arguments of the superior, subdued her objections; and, after taking leave of Jacquilina and the sisterhood, with a beating heart she entered the carriage, and in safety reached the castle.

Long was it ere the spirits of Rosalthe regained composure: every scene, every favourite haunt, recalled to memory the image of the absent Adelbert, and filled her with sorrow and regret. She received with gratitude the friendly attentions of the Baron, the affectionate endearments of Angela: yet, though they strove to divert her thoughts from unpleasant reflections, she could not but remember, that "such things were, and were most dear." Often would she embalm with a tear the sacred spot on which the trembling wood-pigeon was presented to her care—often sigh forth the name of Adelbert, and then shudder at the weakness of her own heart.

In this manner three weeks passed slowly
away,

away, and though her spirits were not exhilarated, still the prognostics of the Baron were in part verified ; for a faint rose expanded its blossom on her cheek, and threw a kind of languid fire in her eyes, which, irradiating her countenance, impressed the whole contour of her perfect features with a captivating, a nameless charm. The fears which, on her first arrival, had confined her entirely to the castle, had diminished ; and she now, with Angela, explored the park and shrubberies without an idea of danger. Frequently did the good Dusseldorf and Agatha extend their walk to the castle, for the purpose of beholding their adopted child—for Rosalthe, apprehensive of the Bandit, had not yet ventured to the cottage.

Since the discovery of Jacquilina's retreat, content appeared to have fixed her mild residence in the breasts of her excellent parents : and could they but live to see peace and health restored to their beloved

loved child, as the dame frequently expressed, "they would be happy as the day was long."

"And no doubt we shall," would the thankful old soldier exclaim; "the Being, who, after an absence of six-and-twenty long years, has restored our daughter a contrite penitent to our arms, will certainly reward the innocence, sufferings, and virtues of Rosalthe."

Such were the hopes of Dusseldorf, and through him soon were they imbibed by the sanguine Agatha; and so strongly were the pleasing phantoms of imagination by her encouraged, that she saw through the vista of expectation her now dejected child in all the pomp of greatness, in all the dignity of state, smiling on the herd of surrounding dependants, and glorying in the tenderness and assiduities of the Count her husband.

The variegated beauties of summer bedecked the scene—the refulgent sun-beams played on the verdant foliage, and ripened the clustering fruitage of vegetation—all Nature smiled beneath the gladsome ray—the birds carolled their songs of gratitude—the herds sported o’er the rich pasturage—and man exulted in the promises of plenty.

“I declare it is almost a month since the Count de Lindenthal left the castle,” remarked Angela, as she walked in the shrubbery with Rosalthe; “methinks he takes a long time to visit his father. I should like to know how often he wanders to the stone gallery.”

“Oh, Angela!” exclaimed Rosalthe, smiling at her gravity.

“What mean you, my dear friend?” enquired Angela; “surely you cannot suppose that I care about it.”

“Nor think about it either, do you?” said Rosalthe.

“I only

“ I only think,” replied Angela, blushing, “ that if I had been absent a month—”

“ Hush!” interrupted Rosalthe, “ methinks I heard a shriek.”

“ I am sure I did,” said Angela, pausing.

A distinct murmur, as of distress, was now perceptible.

“ Let us fly,” said Rosalthe, grasping the hand of her friend, and hurrying forwards; “ the sound proceeded from the park, and perhaps while yet we hesitate, a fellow-creature suffers.”

Several convulsive sobs now reached their ear. Again Angela drew back; but Rosalthe, with the strong sensations of benevolence, impelled her forward. They soon gained the extremity of the shrubbery, but no object met their view.

“ I fear we are wrong,” said Angela, looking anxiously over a gate which led from

from the park; "perhaps we may repent our temerity."

Rosalthe turned pale; she remembered the Bandit, and clung to the arm of her friend. But a tremulous voice calling aloud for help, dissipated all ideas of danger; for Nature had designed her not only to pity, but likewise to relieve, distress.

"I am sure the sound proceeds from yon thicket," said Rosalthe, opening the gate; "let us go; it is but a short distance—and perhaps, at this very moment, the poor creature is convulsed with agony."

"Ladies, for the Virgin's sake, help," sobbed a young woman, hastening towards them; "my poor infirm father has fallen down in yon thicket; and unless immediate relief can be administered, I fear he will perish."

She

She then redoubled her tears and lamentations ; and the too credulous friends, unconscious of deceit, believed every syllable she uttered.

“ How did it happen ? ” enquired Angela, as they quitted the park.

“ Alas ! Lady,” replied the woman, “ his hair is bleached with many winters ; and in crossing the thicket on our way to the hamlet, he stumbled over the stump of a tree, concealed by the long grass, and was unable to rise, or even to speak to me.”

“ Poor girl ! ” said the sympathizing Rosalthe, as a tear stole down her cheek ; “ why did you not fly for succour to the castle ? ”

“ Ah think, Lady, what could I do in the moment of distress ? It was impossible to leave him ; and Heaven can witness I knew not how to act. He was the very best of fathers ; but never again shall I experience his affection.”

“ 'Tis wrong to despair,” observed Angela ;

gela ; “ thy father, I trust, will be restored to thee—thy filial tenderness will yet be rewarded.”

The woman smiled—for they had now reached the thicket. Rosalthe in vain looked eagerly around, to discover the wounded peasant. The fear of treachery flashed across her mind ; and, seizing the arm of Angela, she whispered—“ We are betrayed.”

The woman turned towards them : all traces of sorrow had vanished, and a smile of exultation played upon her features.

“ Where is your father ? ” enquired Angela, in faltering accents.

“ He has long since made his exit from this world,” replied the woman ; “ my task was a nobler performance than rescuing the infirm from death : I have brought back a fugitive bride, whom I now restore to her husband.”

In

In an instant two of the banditti rushed from the thick underwood, and secured the half-fainting Rosalthe. Angela they bound shrieking to a tree; and having placed their hapless captive on a horse, Otho, mounting behind, supported her in his arms, and leaving Cuthbert to settle with the woman the price of her treachery, galloped with his prize into the forest.

Long did they explore its intricate windings; but Rosalthe, overcome with amazement, grief, and horror, observed not the variegated foliage or aromatic odours which impregnated the air from a thousand different shrubs. The beauties of Nature were lost upon her—the majestic oak, the towering linden, the white blossoming chesnut, around whose trunks the wild rose and luxuriant woodbine wantonly crept, were passed unnoticed; even the dreaded name of Hildebrand had ceased to terrify; and, like one already in the
arms

arms of death, she reclined upon the shoulder of the robber.

At length the faintness which had so long condensed every faculty, gave place to a keen sense of her situation. She shuddered, as her eyes rested on the countenance of Otho, in the savage barbarity of whose features mortifying exultation was blended.

“ Fatal, fatal credulity !” she sighed ;
“ Father of Heaven, give me patience, give me resignation, to support the horrors which await me ! Oh, Angela ! tender, suffering friend ! that I had attended to thy apprehensions, dictated by prudence ; then should I have escaped the snare so carefully laid.”

They had now nearly reached the borders of the forest ; and soon entering upon a level plain, beheld, at no great distance,
several

several horsemen riding towards them. Otho, wishing to elude observation, would have returned to the concealment of the forest; but Rosalthe, with a desperate and momentary effort, shrunk from his arms, and, springing upon the ground, fled with the swiftness of lightning towards the horsemen, and, sinking on her knees, raised her white hands in the attitude of supplication.

An elderly man, whose noble mien bespoke the chieftain, rode at the head: his grey locks shone like silver in the sunbeams, and his features wore the stamp of manly beauty. The Count de Lindenthal rode by his side, who, recognizing Rosalthe, leaped from his horse, and raised her from the ground.

“Gracious Heaven, Rosalthe!” he articulated, gazing on her pallid cheek; “what unheard-of mystery is here?”

“Save me, save me!” murmured the

Bandit's Bride, and sunk fainting in his arms.

“ Those features are familiar to me,” said the Baron, addressing his son ; “ I feel a secret sympathy, an emotion trembling around my heart, for which I cannot account.”

“ In the lovely countenance of this injured maid,” replied Sigismar, “ I can trace the exact resemblance of Adela’s portrait, which hangs in the picture-gallery at Lindenthal Castle.”

“ True,” exclaimed the Baron, starting, as Rosalthe returned to life ; “ even now can I fancy I behold my daughter.”

Sigismar raised Rosalthe on the horse before him, which Otho observing, and despairing of being able to regain his prize, rushed with precipitation to the cavern.

Rosalthe and her rescuers had proceeded
but

but a short distance, when the shrill clari-
on of a trumpet warned them of an at-
tack.

“ Ah God! ’tis the banditti, and the
dreadful Hildebrand at the head!” shrieked
the terrified Rosalthe.

“ Fear not,” said De Lindenthal, up-
holding her in his arms; “ my heart is
deeply interested in your misfortunes, and
my blood shall flow in your defence.”

Rosalthe looked eagerly into the defile,
where the glittering of arms bespoke the
assemblage of the band. Ranging his at-
endants in a well-manceuvred phalanx, the
Baron awaited the attack; and the banditti,
enraged at the unexpected defiance, gal-
loped furiously towards them.

“ Victory or death!” shouted Hilde-
brand; “ ’tis for Rosalthe whom we fight.”

“ Victory or death!” echoed from every
F 2 mouth;

mouth; and "Victory or death!" was echoed from the Baron's party.

"Fear not, Rosalthe," again whispered Sigismar; "the Power we worship will not forsake us in the moment of danger."

Burning with jealousy and revenge, the Bandit rushed upon De Lindenthal, who, supporting with one arm the fainting form of Rosalthe, with the other parried his well-directed thrusts. The Baron hastened to the assistance of his son, and, in the same instant that Hildebrand, pale and bleeding, fell powerless from his horse, received a deadly wound in the side.

Consternation was spread throughout the banditti: four of their companions lay dead upon the field; and the remainder, conveying the senseless body of their chief, made a precipitate retreat into the forest. The victors would have pursued, and forced them

them to have renewed the combat; but the situation of the Baron, whose wound bled profusely, required immediate assistance. They composed a kind of litter of the branches which they tore from the trees; and placing the Baron and the nearly exhausted Rosalthe upon it, proceeded towards the cheering towers of the Convent of St. Florensia, which, peeping from among the trees, seemed to greet them with the welcome of hospitality.

As the dread of danger yielded to the certainty of security, the situation of Angela recurred to the mind of Rosalthe. She informed the Count of the whole transaction, who, shuddering at the sufferings and terror of his mistress, dispatched two of the domestics to release and convey her in safety to the castle. He would himself have rushed to her assistance; but his eyes rested on the ashy countenance of his father, and love surrendered to the duty of a son.

As they emerged from the forest, the wounded Baron raised himself on his elbow. He snatched the hand of Rosalthe, and pressing it to his heart—to his lips, sighed convulsively, and murmured the name of “Adela.” His eyes wandered wildly around—they fixed on the ivy-mantled ruins of St. Florensia’s Chapel. A momentary tinge suffused his cheek, and he struck his hand upon his forehead.

“Ah God!” he groaned, “what scenes does that chapel recal to my remembrance! Why dost thou bring me here, Sigismar? is it to awaken remorse? is it to tear the long buried secret from my bleeding heart?”

“Alas, my father, what meanest thou?” enquired the Count.

“It was there,” pursued the Baron, still gazing on the ruin, “that with the breath of flattery I poisoned thy innocence, poor artless, beguiled Jacquilina!”

“Jacquilina!” repeated the astonished Rosalthe.

“Yes,”

“ Yes,” replied the Baron, “ the daughter of the peasant Dusseldorf—the lovely, peerless Jacquilina, who, to this distant moment, my soul ceases not to idolize. Ah, would that pride had yielded to the force of love! then, my Jacquilina, thou wouldst not have fled thy betrayer—then might we both have been happy—happy, no, never! Beatrice forbade it—her ghost would have frightened away peace. She would have asked for Adela—she would have shielded from my fury the hated De Rosencrantz. It was an arduous deed (pausing)—but no matter; the glory was mine, and the honours of my enemy were levelled with the dust. Must I die, my son? (addressing Sigismar)—must the brilliant dream of life close? Once, pride made me immortal—but now (laying his hand on his side) pain obliges me to confess myself a man, and a weak one (looking towards the ruin). The moment of retribution is at hand (he continued);

soon will the wretched De Lindenthal be summoned to his dread account."

The mysterious interdiction inscribed on the portentous packet darted athwart the mind of Rosalthe, and in accents of horror she articulated—"Holy Virgin! do I behold the Baron de Lindenthal?"

Sigismar looked doubtfully towards her, and then turned mournfully to his father, whilst the Baron, gasping for breath, fixed his eyes wildly on the agitated Rosalthe.

"And dost thou, Adela, dost thou arise to upbraid me? dost thou wear the form of the injured Beatrice, merely to mock my sufferings? Take me from the chapel.—See, Sigismar (lowering his voice), beneath yonder arch, at the foot of the broken altar, is my deadly enemy—is the Count de Rosencrantz. Oh my side, my side! the fiends are tearing my heart!

Will

Will no one help me? See how he grins! —‘I am come for my wife,’ he exclaims, ‘for the persecuted Adela.’—How horrible he looks! Now he has me—now he exults in my agony! Dost thou think to bend my spirit, De Rosenkrantz? No, not to avoid the pangs of perdition, from thee would I sue for mercy. To thee my groans would be music, but thou shalt never hear them. See how I despise thy vengeance!” and an hysteric laugh distorted his features.

They now slowly ascended the hill, and in a few minutes rested at the gate of St. Florensia. The community were assembled in the chapel, and the mournful cavalcade were admitted into the court-yard. The situation of the wounded Baron requiring immediate assistance, the intelligence was soon conveyed; and as the Lady Abbess arose from her knees to direct the necessary preparations for his accommodation, Rosalthe rushed into the chapel, and throwing herself in her arms,

F 5.

exclaimed

exclaimed—"It is the Baron de Lindenthal!"

Had an electric shock passed through the brain of the superior, she could not have been more dismayed.—"Holy Virgin! the Baron de Lindenthal!" she repeated, while a sensation of apprehension and horror bleached her cheek.

Jacquilina uttered a piercing shriek, and, tottering a few paces, sunk fainting on the stone floor of the chapel. The sisters bore the senseless nun to her cell; and the Abbess, recovering her resolution, with a dignified air of sorrow, directed the Baron to be received with every respect and attention. Father Anselmo was directly summoned to examine the wound; and the superior, though she awaited the decision with anxious impatience, forbore from visiting the apartment.

CHAP. IV.

TOWARDS the evening, when the Baron, exhausted with fatigue and loss of blood, had sunk into slumber, the Count quitted the convent to steal a hasty visit to the castle, for the purpose of congratulating Angela upon her escape from danger, and to acquaint the Baron de Lunenberg of the alarming situation of his father, of whose recovery little hopes had been conceived.

Angela, thankful for the rescue of her friend, and rejoicing at its having been effected

effected by her lover, attempted not to conceal her sentiments. She received Sigismar with the open candour of sincere affection; and, forgetful of her own past terrors, spoke alone of Rosalthe and the wounded Baron.

“Cannot your father be removed to the castle?” enquired the Baron de Lunenberg.

“Not without the greatest danger,” replied De Lindenthal; “for all our hopes depend on quiet.”

“Why at first was he not brought hither?” asked Angela.

“Because,” answered Sigismar, “the Convent of St. Florensia was at a shorter distance, and immediate succour was necessary.”

“We will accompany you in your return, my Lord,” said the Baron; “Angela no doubt is impatient to behold her friend, and I am no less so to assist in administering consolation to your wounded father.”

Sigismar

Sigismar sighed.—“ Alas !” he exclaimed, “ in this world, I fear, the hours of consolation can be but few.”

“ Yield not to dejection,” said Angela, sweetly smiling; “ years of happiness will yet be ours; and Heaven, I trust, will spare the Baron to share them with us.”

De Lindenthal spoke not; he pressed the extended hand of his beloved counselor, and threw himself mournfully into the carriage. It was not the danger which threatened his father's life, which plunged in melancholy the steady mind of the Count; alas, no ! it was the heavy load which appeared to press upon his soul—which weighed him down even to the dust—which poisoned the few remaining hours of existence; for conscience,

“ While she seems to sleep
On rose and myrtle, lull'd with syren song,
While she seems nodding o'er her charge, to drop
On headlong appetite the slacken'd rein,

And

And gives us up to license unrecall'd,
The sly informer minutes every fault,
And her dread diary with horror fills."

He feared lest some dark story should come to light—lest some deed, performed in the unguarded moments of youth, should cast an indelible stain on the memory of his father. He remembered the mysterious account given by the house-keeper, and the strict silence ever preserved relative to the fate of the Lady Adela.

In the wildness of delirium, the Baron had pronounced her name, with an emotion, with an agony, which remorse could alone have occasioned. Doubt succeeded doubt; and when they paused at the gate of the convent, he enquired after his father with a sad, a fearful apprehension.

During the absence of the Count, the Baron had awakened, and regained the
force

force of reason : but the heavy languor of weakness hung upon him, and he could only articulate the name of his son. Sigismar, ever eager to anticipate the wishes of his parent, hastened to the chamber ; whilst Angela went in search of the Abbess or Rosalthe. She found her friend administering consolation to the nearly distracted Jacquilina. Every sorrow, in the danger of the Baron, was renewed ; she thought not of her injuries—she thought not of his guilt—she thought alone of the early object of her romantic love, and pictured, in the agony of sorrow, his dissolution.

“ Oh spare him, spare him, Heaven ! ” she articulated, “ spare him for repentance ! Let him live to acknowledge thy truth, to adore thy justice.”

Long did Sigismar linger by the couch of his father—long did he strive to soothe his anguish, to refute his doubts ; but still
a fearful

a fearful weight oppressed him—still his eyes glared around the chamber. Big with articulation, often did he grasp the hand of the Count—often, in the still soft voice of confidence, begin to speak, and then, shuddering at his own internal sensations, bury all in an agonizing groan..

“ My father,” implored Sigismar, as, kneeling by his side, he clasped in his the pallid hand of the Baron, “ wherefore this agitation? wherefore this alarm? Is there on earth aught that can give thee comfort? Is there a wish which thy heart can form, and which thy son can gratify? Speak, my father; tell me all—trust me with the fearful secret.”

“ Ah !” interrupted the Baron, as a momentary glance of anger darted from his eyes, “ dost thou suspect me? Is guilt so conspicuously stamped upon my features? dost thou know the deed, which, in the deep, the awful gloom of eternity, bears evidence against my soul? Say, my son,
dost

dost thou know that Beatrice, my wedded, virtuous wife, was by me——”

“ Ah what ?” exclaimed the Count, with a start of horror.

The Baron looked wildly upon his hand.

“ Years cannot wash away the stain,” he resumed, “ neither can the dews of Heaven bleach a conscience blackened with guilt. Ah God ! if thy displeasure cannot be appeased—if my deep prayers cannot reach thee—if my misdeeds, calling aloud for vengeance, cannot be averted—then on me execute thy wrath, but spare my guiltless son.”

“ Alas, my father !” murmured Sigismar, as a flood of regret and tenderness checked his utterance.

“ Hard is it to fix the barrier of vice,” pursued the Baron, feebly pressing the hand of his son, “ hard is it to say, to this point will I go, but not one step beyond.

In

In the hours of youth, passion too frequently guides the dominion of the soul, and hurries all before it. Say, my son, dost thou not condemn thy father? dost thou not hate, nay almost curse him?"

"If my affection could administer comfort, how soon, my father, shouldst thou feel it," replied Sigismar.

A tear burst from the eye of the Baron, and trickled down his pallid cheek.

"Bitter task," he murmured, "to fall from the long gazed-at pinnacle of greatness—to drop the mask of honour—to appear at once the slave of ungoverned rage, of unlicensed vengeance."

"What means my father?" again articulated Sigismar.

"I am," faltered the Baron—"nay look not at me, lest thy deep gaze should freeze the current of speech, and awe me into silence—I am a—villain."

The

The Count started from his knees—his hand grasped the hilt of his sword.

“Had any other tongue proclaimed it,” he exclaimed, “by yon sacred Heaven, this well-tempered weapon should have expunged the impression from his heart.”

“I am,” feebly articulated the Baron, hiding his face on the pillow, “a—murderer.”

Sigismar clasped his hands—he leant trembling against the bed—no reproach, no word escaped him. Long was the silence. At length the Baron looked fearfully towards him.

“May I call thee son?” he sighed; “say, Sigismar, dost thou not forswear thy father? dost thou not fly him as a fearful pest—as a loathsome weed which poisons happiness?”

For a moment Sigismar struggled with
the

the heavy sobs of grief, and then sinking on his knees, pressed the hand of the Baron.

“Fly thee!” he repeated mournfully; “little dost thou know me, my father. Sorrow links me to thee, and pity cements the chain a thousand times more firmly than in the prosperous hours of unclouded greatness. Give me thy confidence, and I will share thy fortune. If from thy country thou wouldst fly—if, in some distant realm, thou wouldst conceal thy name and family, I will attend thy steps—I will watch thee, guard thee—I will mingle my tears with thine, will pour forth my prayers for thy returning peace.”

“And Angela, thy promised bride,” articulated the Baron.

Sigismar sighed; he paused for a moment—he pressed his hand upon his forehead.

“Shall

“ Shall be renounced,” he replied, with mournful fervour; “ not for my life’s happiness would I make her the partner of disgrace.”

“ Thy task will not be performed, my affectionate son,” said the Baron; “ thy father’s existence is now at its latest ebb. The past cannot be recalled—the life I have taken cannot be restored. Beatrice died a saint, and I have lived—a sinner. Jealousy nerved my arm, and pointed my dagger—but no more; my confession cannot expunge the foul deed of murder—cannot reanimate the stiffened corse—cannot resuscitate the shrunkened limbs. In the silence of my own heart will I commune—from God, not man, will I solicit mercy.”

De Lindenthal sighed.

“ But now, my son,” continued the Baron, “ one bitter secret must be revealed,

vealed, lest, hurled into eternity, injustice should call aloud for vengeance, and claim a sad reprisal. Shall I brave the danger? (he inwardly murmured) shall I leave him to his fate? or, shall I open the gate of liberty, and bid him live to curse me?"

"Explain thyself, my father," again importuned the Count; "remember the eye of Heaven reads thy heart, and judges all thy deeds."

"Avaunt, proud spirit!" resumed the Baron; "long hast thou swayed my actions, long hast thou bent me to thy will: henceforth I forswear thee—henceforth no other victims will I sacrifice."

"Who wilt thou save, my father?" questioned Sigismar; "for Heaven, to recompense one act of mercy, will erase a whole list of misdeeds."

"Sayest thou so?" eagerly questioned the Baron; "may I hope for pardon? Oh that I had trusted thee before! The tear of pity would have dropped upon my heart,

heart, would have embalmed the expiring spark of virtue, and kindled it to humanity."

He paused—he grasped the hand of Sigismar—he looked steadfastly upon him.

"Fly, fly, my son! hasten to Lindenthal Castle—ask Barnard for the Count de Rosencrantz—seize him—tell him thou knowest the secret—and with the noble prisoner bring him hither.—Yet stay (continued the Baron, for already had Sigismar reached the door of the chamber), if I should live——"

"Shall it be in guilt?" interrupted the Count; "remember thou art not immortal."

"True, true," repeated the Baron, "but the Count de Rosencrantz is my most deadly enemy, more baneful to my soul than poison to the body. I cannot bear his exultation; and should he mention pity, worse from him would it be than
the

the pangs of death. Coward that I am, why did I not bury the fatal secret in the grave? What do I fear? why should I tremble? who knows the dream of death? Perhaps——”

“All-seeing God!” ejaculated the horror-stricken Sigismar.

“Perhaps the idle cant of ranting priests——perhaps——”

“Hush, hush, my father! look on Creation’s picture—look on the state of man—look on yon arched Heaven—and let thy impious doubts expire! The ant as well as the lion—nay, the smallest minutia of vegetation, speaks a Creator, and bids man glorify his works.”

“But will that make me live?” articulated the Baron; “will that extend the little space of breathing? Ah no! Could death receive a bribe for a year—for a month—nay for a week—my treasures should purchase minutes, nor be too dearly expended.”

Sigismar

Sigismar clasped his hands; and as he wiped the tears from his cheek, again approached the door.

“Do not leave me,” groaned the Baron, starting erect in his bed, and gazing wildly on him; “the pale ghost of Beatrice has taken her station at my side, and smiles as she points to the yawning gulph of perdition. Dost thou not see her? She shakes her head—she shows her bleeding bosom—she mocks my anguish with the prospect of De Rosencrantz’s happiness. Curse him, curse him! If my eyes could kill him—if, like the fang of the scorpion, they could sting his heart, even now would I glut my vengeance.”

The violence of exertion tore the bandage from the wound; and, covered with blood, the unhappy Baron sunk exhausted on his pillow. Long was it ere the death-like faintness subsided—long was it ere the

Baron re-opened his eyes, and distinguished surrounding objects. They rested on his son, and his lips motioned as though he wished to speak. Sigismar silently bent over him, and the Baron feebly articulated—"Go for De Rosencrantz."

"And leave thee, my father?"

The Baron paused, and the big tear proclaimed his feelings.

"No, stay, my son—stay and soothe the agony of death; but send for De Rosencrantz."

Thus sanctioned by the desire of his father, Sigismar quitted the apartment, and in the fullness of confidence imparted the tale to the Baron de Lunenberg. Astonishment, regret, and sorrow, marked the recital.

"I will myself go," said the Baron;

"Angela

“Angela shall remain at the convent, and carefully will I explore this unheard-of mystery.”

Sigismar could not speak; he could only press in grateful silence the hand of the Baron, who, in less than an hour, commenced his journey.

Gradually did the strength of the Baron de Lindenthal diminish. His son attended night and day by the couch, now speaking comfort to his drooping spirits, now soothing him in the frenzied starts of delirium. Rosalthe watched each varying turn of his countenance, and attended him with the unwearied assiduity of a daughter. Still did the Abbess, excepting when sleep weighed down the eyelids of the Baron, absent herself from the apartment; but her hours were passed in tears and prayers; and often would she kneel upon the grave of the departed Adela, and supplicate Heaven to pardon and receive him.

On the fourth evening from the departure of the Baron de Lunenberg, a heavy stupor absorbed the faculties of the Baron, and he lay an unresisting emblem of mortality. The pallid hue of death was stamped upon his features, and every labouring breath threatened the dissolution of nature.

The Lady Abbess entered the chamber; she stood with her hands clasped in devotion by the side of the bed; she threw back the dark veil which shrouded her features; she struggled to repress the sobs which agitated her bosom.

“ De Lindenthal,” she murmured, “ wretched father of a sainted child ! Oh God, pity and forgive him ! Let not my injuries rise in judgment against him ; and as my heart sincerely pronounces his pardon, sincerely condoles in his affliction, so may the balm of thy mercy cheer it ! De Lindenthal, father of the idolized Adela !
Oh

Oh that the grave which opens wide to receive thee, may yield thee as peaceful a resting-place as it has done thy child! Kneel down with me, Rosalthe; mingle thy prayers with mine; supplicate the all-searching eye of Providence to calm the tortured spirit of thy expiring grandfather."

Sigismar gazed anxiously on the agitated countenance of the Abbess, while Rosalthe knelt sobbing by her side.

"Oh thou Supreme, thou all-omniscient Creator!" piously articulated the superior, as the calm serenity of religion irradiated her features; "Thou, who with one glance perceiveth all that is passing in this world, look with mild compassion on this thy expiring creature; lengthen not his agonies, embitter not his pangs; but receive, as an atonement for past transgressions, the offering of our prayers."

It was near midnight when the lethargic stupor, which had so long condensed the senses of the Baron, dissipated; when, with a palsied start, he opened his eyes, and fixed them on the bending form of the Abbess. He uttered a fearful shriek—the heavy damp hung upon his forehead—he groaned—he writhed in agony.

“Soul-harrowing sight!” he murmured; “Beatrice! Beatrice! art thou come to arraign me? Why dost thou look so terrible? Hide that ghastly wound! Ah, how long hast thou burst the confines of the grave? how long from the mouldering tomb hast thou emerged to torture me?”

“’Tis to comfort thee I come,” said the superior, rising from her knees, “to pray for thee—to help thee—to speak the blessed words of peace to thy disordered mind—to dispel the horrors of despair, and bid thee hope for mercy.”

“Fearful, blasting sight!” ejaculated the distracted Baron; “touch me not, lest
by

by the deadly grasp my sinews shrink, and turn to dust as thine art."

He paused—he gasped for breath.

"In the lineaments of thy face," he continued, "I trace the murdered Beatrice; but while yet I look, the flesh drops from it—the worms crawl from the hollow of thine eyes! Save me, Heaven! The shroud opens—the skeleton limbs are seen. Oh save me, save me! or in annihilation give me bliss!"

"Fear not, De Lindenthal," articulated the Abbess; "no terrifying apparition stands before thee—Beatrice lives—thy injured wife, long dead to the world, approaches thy couch, to soothe thy expiring moments with her pardon!"

"'Tis false," exclaimed the Baron, "I heard her groan, I saw her die—the blood gushed from her bosom, and streamed upon my hands. See, Sigismar, look at my fingers—murder is stamped upon them."

Rosalthe sunk at the feet of the Abbess.

“ My mother,” she exclaimed, “ my tender, blessed mother !”

The superior raised her, kissed her cheek, and turned to the desponding Baron.

“ Thou art not a murderer, De Lindenthal,” she said ; “ thy crimes are great, yet are they within the reach of mercy. Say, wilt thou repent and live ?”

“ Live !” eagerly repeated the Baron, interrupting her ; “ Oh give me life ! rescue me from the fell tyrant death, and no other boon do I solicit.”

“ Mistaken man !” sobbed the Abbess ; “ hadst thou not yielded to the incitements of vice—hadst thou curbed thy headstrong passions—reason, conscience, and religion, would now triumphantly support thy soul, would deprive even death of its terrors. Compose thy mind, confess thy sins, open thy heart to Heaven ! Remember that for
thee,

thee, for us, for sinners, a Redeemer died. Look with humble hope to the Saviour of the world—fix thy mind on the glorious prospect of eternity! so may the mists of error fade before thee—so may thy soul, bleached by a late but contrite repentance, attain forgiveness, and live.”

The wretched votary of vice heard her not; a thick film dimmed his eyes; his pulse scarcely beat; the tide of life ebbed slowly; and nature but faintly struggled. Suddenly a lambent ray played over his features; he looked around, and the smile, or rather grin of defiance, rendered his visage more ghastly.

“Art thou here, De Rosencrantz?” he exclaimed, with momentary strength; “dost thou exult in my weakness? dost thou think to humble a De Lindenthal? Have at thee then, proud boaster—thus let me stamp my vengeance on thy heart.”

With the last efforts of expiring life he started erect in his bed: he attempted to extend his arm, but the bandage restrained him; he tore it forcibly away, the blood gushed from the wound, and, sinking back on his pillow, with a heavy groan he expired.

Sigismar clasped his hands—Rosalthe shrieked—the superior stood gazing silently upon him.

CHAP. V.

“HOW still, how gloomy, is the sleep of death ! What heart can behold the pale, cold relic of mortality unmoved ! What eye can gaze upon the stiffened form, once animated with celestial fire, and warm in the pursuits of life, without reflecting on the visionary state of man—without turning from the vain and perishable allurements of the world, and fixing on the ‘Rock of Ages,’ the promises of a Redeemer ! If upon this anchor, this inviolable foundation, we rest our hopes of happiness, disappointment will not blight our expectations, neither will the gloom

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of

of discontent oppress our spirits: we shall not be tossed by each succeeding gust of passion, neither shall we sink the dupes of fallacy, or the sports of chance."

Such were the reflections of the Lady Abbess, as, on the morning following the dissolution of the Baron de Lindenthal, she rested against the bed, and gazed upon his ghastly countenance.

" Ah God!" she murmured, " how transient is the career of pride! how short the boast of greatness! The scythe of death makes no distinctions; and the noble and the base, the powerful and the oppressed, will alike in the dust moulder. A few feet of earth will bury a king as effectually as it will a beggar; and the pompous monument, speaking to after ages the titles of the deceased, serves but to proclaim, that

" Here, in the rich, the honour'd, fam'd, and great,
See the false scale of happiness complete."

The

The entrance of Rosalthe, announcing the return of the Baron de Lunenberg, dissipated the ideas of the superior; and with eyes still humid with tears, a bosom still labouring with the sobs of sorrow, she accompanied her to the parlour, to learn the result of the embassy.

The Baron rose at their entrance, and introduced the Count de Rosencrantz, who gazed upon Rosalthe with an emotion not to be described—with an emotion which checked the power of utterance, and which, quick as thought, extended to the heart of its object, and filled her eyes with tears. Rosalthe hastened to the window; the Count clasped his hands and sighed; he would have followed her, but he dared not trust the impulse of his feelings: she was a stranger, and affection might be deemed intrusive. Again Rosalthe turned—again their eyes met—and again they wondered at their agitation.

The

The person of the Count de Rosencrantz was tall and well-proportioned, his countenance expressive, for the varying sensations of his soul might be traced in the lineaments; but his features wore the pensive cast of thought, and the pallid hue of sickness—not gleaned from watching by the taper of abstruse and solitary study—not from yielding to the deep unsocial pleasures of meditation—not from the corroding gloom of discontent—not from the poisoning draughts of vitiating pleasure—but from persecution and calamity, from long confinement, and from woe. Alas! the strongest mind cannot for years support the unvarying burden of sorrow; and the heart deprived of the blessing of communication, must sink into the stagnated languor of melancholy.

In another hour, joined by the excellent Dusseldorf and Agatha, they assembled in the parlour, and impatiently waited the breaking of the seal. The Abbess trem-
bled

bled as she took the portentous packet from the casket, in which for so many years it had been preserved ; and giving it to Father Anselmo to peruse, sunk on her knees, and fixed her eyes on Rosalthe. The hermit unfolded the paper, and in a deep, impressive voice, commenced—

“ Ere the eyes of my daughter can read these lines—ere her heart can sympathize in the persecutions and afflictions of her parents—death must have removed the Baron de Lindenthal from the world—death must have frozen the cruel, the relentless heart of my father.”

“ Ah God !” ejaculated the Count de Rosencrantz. Rosalthe’s eyes were fixed upon him ; and again Father Anselmo proceeded—

“ The veil will then be rent—the mystery will then be elucidated—and my child, my Rosalthe, the supposed daughter of
the

the peasant Dusseldorf, will be no longer kept in ignorance of her family : she will then know herself to be the heiress of my murdered husband, Leopold Count de Rosencrantz."

The paper dropped from the hand of Father Anselmo ; while Rosalthe, struggling with the accumulated sensations of rapture and surprise, rushed from her chair, and threw herself into the extended arms of her father. To feel herself no longer the offspring of doubt—to know the grave had left her a parent—to find that parent tender, affectionate, indulgent—was joy too great to bear, was joy bordering on agony. She would have knelt, but he strained her too closely to his heart—she would have spoken, but he kissed her murmuring lips, and checked her utterance.

" My tender child ! my darling daughter ! dear, precious pledge of my Adela's love ! "

love!" he articulated, mingling his tears with Rosalthe's; "Oh blessed shade! sainted spirit! look down from Heaven—look and smile upon thy offspring!"

The Lady Abbess drew her veil over her face, but her stifled sobs betrayed her agitation; whilst the Baron de Lunenberg, Angela, and Sigismar, each sympathetically interested in the scene, beheld with admiration the force of nature. Nor must, in the noble group, the humble, happy cottagers be forgotten. Agatha, with a mother's fondness, beheld the splendid prospects of her child; while Dusseldorf stood by her side, his full heart raised to Heaven, and his hands clasped in grateful thanks.

Long was it ere their feelings became composed—long was it ere their attention could be sufficiently recalled from the joyful discovery, to fix on the contents of the packet. Father Anselmo again prepared to read; and Rosalthe, reclining on the
shoulder

shoulder of her parent, fixed her eyes upon him.

“ Let not the transition from dependance to affluence, from obscurity to rank, destroy thy humility, Rosalthe. Think, that from the grave thou hearest thy mother warn thee; or rather picture her beneath the thatched roof of thy foster parents, unknown, unsought after, widowed, and unprotected—struggling with calamity, grief, and horror—now invoking death, now hearing thy piteous moan, and striving to live for thy welfare. Picture the last efforts of the expiring Adela, my child—think that thou now beholdest her supported in her bed, and writing for the benefit of thee her orphan—picture this scene, Rosalthe; let it sink deep in thy heart, and mark the mutability of fortune. Once I smiled on the bosom of an indulgent mother—once I was the acknowledged heiress of the Baron de Lindenthal’s vast domains; but death, envious of
my

my bliss, snatched my angel mother from the world, and, dead to honour, virtue, generosity, my father substituted in the place of the chaste and excellent Beatrice, the victim of his pleasure—the debased, the ruined Jacquilina.”

Dusseldorf breathed an exclamation of horror, while Agatha strove in vain to stifle her sobs.

“ I was removed from the castle to a neighbouring monastery,” read Father Anselmo, “ where, in the affection of the superior, I forgot every little scene of past sorrow. The rudiments of virtue, the blessings of religion, were instilled into my mind; and not until the day in which I received the orders of my father to return to the castle, had I ever experienced despondency. The Baron had formed a second connexion, and was a second time a widower. He was left with an infant heir to his estate. Ten happy years had
flown

flown swiftly away since my entrance into the convent; and never, till almost the moment of my departure, had I reflected on the possibility of the Baron's recalling me. With tearful eyes, and an aching heart, I eagerly sought the Abbess: she also had been weeping; but observing my dejection, she strove to suppress her sorrow.

'My child,' she enquired, folding me to her heart, 'why dost thou weep? art thou not going to embrace a father?'

"I sighed, and pressing her hand to my lips—'Alas!' I exclaimed, 'to embrace a father whom I know not, I am torn from a more than mother—from a tender friend I revere.'

"A tear stole down the cheek of the superior.

'Fie, Adela,' she said, 'these regrets must not be indulged: duty calls thee to the arms of thy father; approach him with gratitude and respect; bear ever in mind the strong ties of filial obedience; sometimes with affection remember thy absent friends,

friends, and never fail, in the new path of life upon which thou art entering, to follow the lessons I have carefully inculcated into thy ductile mind. Should the Baron at times suffer thee to quit the castle, then visit our community, and by thy presence enliven our little circle. Adieu, my beloved child (leading me to the convent gate), be virtuous, ever respect the laws of thy Creator, and be happy.'

"My heart imbibed the counsels of the Abbess; and tearing myself from her arms, I entered my father's carriage, and soon lost sight of the monastery. Alas! this was a day deeply registered in the annals of my destiny—a day which was to mark the future colour of my fate—a day which was to present to my unsophisticated heart, warm and unguarded from monastic gloom, the elegant, all-subduing form of thy father, armed with a dangerous plea in the breast of sensibility—with the name of defender.

"As we passed the gloomy skirts of a forest,

forest, even while the dark towers of Lindenthal Castle, frowning on the broad borders of the Elbe, were in sight, a fierce band of marauders rushed from a thicket. A skirmish ensued. Faintly was it supported by my attendants; and shrieking, I must have been torn from the carriage, but for the assistance of a stranger and his servants. The scale of victory was turned; the ruffians fled, and I received the congratulations of my deliverer. But ah, my child! that dear, that invincible stranger first taught my heart to beat—first filled it with the painful, rapturous emotions of love. He spoke, and his accents sunk deep into my soul—he sighed, and my bosom heaved in sympathy. He escorted me to the castle—he took his leave at the gate—and the long, long night was passed in musing on the adventure.

“ From this period my joys and my sorrows took their rise; for until then life had been but a negative state of peace, and my days unclouded as a summer’s sky.

“ The

“ The cell of the holy Lawrence was the scene of our stolen interviews; and there did I first learn that the daughter of a De Lindenthal had been indebted for her life to the valour of a De Rosencrantz. It was a name I had been taught to hate—a name my father never mentioned but with the bitterest imprecations.

“ In early youth, at the Elector’s court, when each heart, glowing with martial ardour, panted to signalize itself in the glorious achievement of the tournament, the late Count de Rosencrantz, the father of my preserver, had gathered the laurels of victory—had unhorsed thy grandsire, Rosalthe, and compelled him to ask his life. The wound which in that hour pride received, was never after effaced: mortification rankled till it turned to inveterate malice; every peace-offering was haughtily rejected, and years served but to widen the breach. Even death obliterated not the supposed injury; for the unjustifiable

fiable hatred of the Baron pursued the unoffending heir of his enemy.

“ Electrified at the unexpected intelligence, I would have rushed to the castle, and renounced at once his love; but he seized my hand, and with tears implored me to hear him. I listened, and soon did the deadly enmity which had subsisted between the two families appear to my infatuated eyes unjust and ill-founded. I listened to his vows, till every ungenial gust of prejudice vanished, and my heart, attuned to tenderness, blessed the heir of a De Rosencrantz.”

Rosalthe still clung to her father, who, grasping her hand, hid his face in his handkerchief, and endeavoured to conceal his agitation. The superior continued to kneel, and every individual there assembled attended with commiseration and attention.

‘ Ah why, my Adela, didst thou fly so abruptly from me?’ resumed Father Anselmo; ‘ why did thy tears flow? why did thy bosom heave, when, yielding to thy solicitations, I pronounced the name of my family? Is the force of prejudice so strong? Are the vows of love so transient? Meet me, and tell me whether as a De Rosencrantz, I have lost the influence in thy heart, which, as thy unknown defender, I possessed? Say, Adela, shall I forswear my name to retain thy affection? shall I renounce every tie which nature and habit have cemented, to secure thy love?’

“ Such was the impassioned tenor of the note, which Justina, my confidential attendant, put into my hand, soon after my return to the castle. I impatiently watched the gray twilight of evening; and when the owl hooted on the turrets of the castle, repaired, with a beating heart, to the place of appointment. In that interview, my child, did every scruple vanish. There did I yield to the solicitations of thy father;

and sanctioned by the approbation of Father Lawrence, consented to become his wife. The hour which was to cement our vows arrived. The Baron was from home. Supported by the arm of Justina, I hastened to the hermitage; and when I extended my hand to receive the pledge of our union, the countenance of the Friar turned pale, his lips quivered, and his eyes rested on the bracelet which glittered on my arm—the bracelet which contained the fondly-cherished resemblance of my departed mother.”

“ Ah God! who was Friar Lawrence?” sighed the Abbess, snatching the bracelet from the casket. Every eye was directed towards her. She eagerly kissed it, and then replacing it in the casket, with convulsive earnestness, murmured the name of *De Kronenfeld*, and burst into tears.

“ I returned to the castle,” pursued the hermit, “ and many months passed away
in

in anxious suspense and stolen happiness. Often did I see thy beloved father, my Rosalthe—often were the protestations of love renewed. At length the calm hours of peace were destroyed by the approach of threatened danger. It was necessary I should remove from the castle—it was necessary I should conceal myself from the searching eye of the Baron. A well-connected plan was put in force; and under the pretence of visiting the convent in which I was educated, I removed, as I fondly flattered myself, from the castle unsuspected.

“The temporary retreat De Rosencrantz had chosen for me was hid by the shadow of a mountain; and there, in the course of two months, my heart first throbbed with the sensations of a parent. I gazed upon thee, my darling child—I strained thee to my anxious bosom—I forgot all my cares, or at least they were all centered in thee. Ah God! how deep, how flattering were the transports of thy father,

when he first beheld thee—when he first gazed on thy infant features, and baptized thee with the tears of affection ! But short was the period of happiness, transient the moments of bliss ! Sooner than to be torn from thee, my babe, I had vowed to renounce every tie, father, country, all—for Saxony could not afford us a secure asylum from the implacable vengeance of the Baron.

“ To accelerate our flight, De Rosen-
crantz left me ; and on the evening of his expected return, as I hushed thee to repose on my bosom, and anxiously listened to each passing sound, in the hope of thy father’s arrival, the door of my apartment opened, and the Baron de Lindenthal stood before me. In the first impulse of amazement and apprehension, I shrieked, and clasped thee, as though for safety I would have hid thee in my heart.

‘ Why this alarm ? ’ said my father, smothering his resentment, and seating himself by my side. ‘ How long hast thou been
absent

absent from the convent? How fares the Abbess (sarcastically), and the esteemed sisterhood? Speak, Adela; methinks I should be made acquainted with the concerns of my child.'

"Alas, I could not: pale, trembling, I gazed upon him like a convicted prisoner waiting the awful sentence of death.

'Whose infant art thou fondling?' he continued, tearing aside the covering from thy face, my daughter. 'Ah, Adela! methinks 'tis like thyself,' and his penetrating eyes seemed to read my very soul.

"He paused, but still was I silent—still did my bosom heave with convulsive sobs. 'The farce,' exclaimed my inexorable father, in a voice choaked by anger, 'can be continued no longer. Name the father of that child, Adela, or by the eternal God heavy shall be my vengeance!'

'Spare me! spare me!' I murmured.

'No evasions,' rejoined my obdurate parent, with an earnestness not to be contradicted; 'honour demands a victim for

the stigma thou hast dared to cast upon my name; and by Heaven it shall have one. Name thy seducer, or take a last farewell of thy child.'

" I shrieked, I sunk on my knees; I held my sleeping cherub towards him: he smiled at my agony, and called to his assistance the instrument of his iniquity, the old, the callous Barnard.

' Look on my infant,' I supplicated; ' on me wreak thy vengeance, but spare my unoffending babe !'

' Tear the brat from her arms,' thundered the enraged Baron.

" Barnard approached to fulfil the barbarous order of his lord; when, maddened by my shrieks, my adored, my hapless Leopold rushed to my assistance.

' Fear not, my love,' he exclaimed, folding me to his heart; ' a husband's claims shall shield thee and our babe from the unjust power of thy obdurate father.'

" Ah God! momentary was the dart of death!

' De

‘ De Rosencrantz, my hated enemy, the husband of my daughter!’ pronounced the Baron, and instantaneously sheathed his sword in the breast of my devoted Leopold. He fell—he spoke not—motionless he lay a corse at my feet.”

The Count de Rosencrantz, overcome by the remembrance, started from his chair, and paced the room with quick and disordered steps. Father Anselmo paused. The Abbess breathed a heavy sigh, and raised her eyes to Heaven; while Rosalthe, nearly convulsed with sorrow, sunk trembling on her knees.

“ Proceed, holy father,” faintly articulated the Count, as, retaking his seat, he raised Rosalthe, and supported her in his arms. The anchorite proceeded—

“ Madness condensed the feelings of that moment: I fainted not—I breathed

not one lamentation—neither did my burning eyes discharge a single tear. I gazed on my murdered love—from him on my child. The threat of my father reverberated on my ear; and hiding thee, my babe, in my bosom, I stole, in the moment of confusion, from the chamber, passed quickly down the stairs, and quitted the house. The darkness of the night was a safeguard against pursuit; and I fled without knowing whither. The thunder roared, and the rain fell; despair gave me wings, and my infant slumbered unconscious of danger. Alas, Rosalthe, many hours were forgotten—swept from the tablets of memory by the sponge of distraction; for when recollection returned, the voice of peace reached my ear, and my eyes beheld thee, my darling child, reclining in security on the bosom of a friend and benefactress. Yes, Dusseldorf, yes, Agatha! sympathizing and excellent pair! receive the heartfelt gratitude of thy
adopted

adopted child, thy Rosalthe's mother; receive the only tribute fortune has left her to bestow—the thanks, the prayers, the blessings of the expiring Adela.”

CHAP. VI.

“POOR suffering Adela!” said the Abbess, as she took the packet from Father Anselmo, “thou wert indeed the sport of fortune, the sad inheritor of thy mother’s sorrows; but thanks to that gracious Providence, who, by conducting thy steps to the dwelling of virtue, threw thy offspring not only upon the humanity of strangers, but upon the protection of a relative and a parent!”

The Count de Rosencrantz looked anxiously towards her.

“Yes, my Lord,” she continued, “I am that relative—I am the persecuted Beatrice, the wife of the late Baron de Lindenthal, the mother of the departed Adela!”

“Mysterious Heaven!” ejaculated De Rosencrantz, as every eye was with astonishment directed towards the superior.

Sigismar shuddered at the crimes of his father; while Rosalthe, in the rapture of joy, threw herself into the extended arms of her friend, her instructress, her admonisher, her grandmother. Every eye dropped a sympathetic tear, every lip articulated a congratulation. The good old Dusseldorf and his worthy partner, with exulting pride, kissed their adopted daughter, and received the grateful acknowledgments of her father.

“Spare us, my Lord,” said the veteran,
chasing

chasing the spontaneous effusion of sensibility from his cheek; "if praise is due for assisting the unfortunate, long has the obligation been requited by the affection of Rosalthe."

"Excellent man!" exclaimed the Count, grasping his hand, and pressing it with the warmth of friendship, "act ever as thou hast done, and thou wilt find a rich reprisal worth all the boasted gems of the east—the approbation of thy own heart. But why, my young friend, dost thou look so dejected? (addressing De Lindenthal) I could wish, this happy, this eventful day, every countenance to be cheered with a smile."

Sigismar clasped his hands, and burst into tears.

"The Baron de Lindenthal," he articulated, in accents of grief and shame, "was my father."

Angela, regardless of every other object, alone beheld the tears of Sigismar: she sprung from her seat—she flew across the apartment, and snatching his hand, in the warmth of her heart pressed it to her lips.

“Do not weep, dearest De Lindenthal,” she exclaimed; “thou hast lost thy father, but I will be——”

She stopt—she trembled—she remembered where she was—and a burning blush died her countenance.

“My all of peace—my all of happiness,” he replied, retaining her hand, and gazing tenderly on her, “if thou wilt take me, Angela, covered as I am with regret and shame.”

“Wilt thou make my peace with the Baron, lovely Angela?” said the Count de Rosencrantz.

Sigismar started.

“Admit

“Admit of this mediatrix, my Lord,” he continued; “and if I have incautiously wounded thy feelings, pardon the error of the head, not the impulse of the heart.”

Sigismar would have spoken, but his feelings denied utterance. De Rosencrantz read his emotion, and turned hastily away.

“My excellent son,” said the Abbess, addressing De Lindenthal, “brother of my beloved Adela, sole heir of my deceased husband, well do I know thy virtue, well do I guess thy internal conflicts: if thou hast lost a father, receive in me a mother—not openly, not avowedly such, for in thy heart the secret must be concealed. To this assembly, Beatrice, the once acknowledged Baroness de Lindenthal, lives; but to the world, she must, she will ever continue dead.”

“Mother!” murmured Sigismar, sinking at the feet of the superior; “blessed name! but Rosalthe——”

“Shall

“ Shall be alone my charge,” interrupted the Count de Rosencrantz; “ and if I could find a being amiable and worthy as her uncle, without a pang would I resign her.”

Rosalthe turned pale, and grasped the arm of the Lady Beatrice. She remembered the Bandit, and her heart sunk in sadness. Her father, perceiving the change in the countenance of his beloved, his long lost child, would have flown to her, would have pressed her to his bosom, and implored her confidence; but a well-directed glance from the superior checked him. He turned and addressed Angela; and in a few moments the agitation of his features betrayed his knowledge of the source of his daughter's uneasiness.

De Lindenthal had regained his composure; and the Lady Abbess, to rouse Rosalthe from the deep melancholy into which she seemed plunged, intreated the Count de Rosencrantz to inform them of
the

the events which had transpired since the dreadful moment in which the Lady Adela beheld him pale and senseless at her feet.

“ Alas!” he replied, “ the unceasing persecution of many years may be summed up in few words. The gloomy walls of a prison, and the melancholy reflections of a desponding mind, will not embellish the page of history, or claim the attention of a casual peruser; it is a negative state in the annals of existence, deeply registered on the suffering heart.

“ Sensation,” he continued, “ returned long before recollection; for many days elapsed ere I knew where I was—ere memory recalled what had passed. I found myself immured within the walls of the Castle De Lindenthal, as I afterwards understood, in an extensive, well-furnished apartment, whose windows looked towards the Elbe, by whose dark waves its base was washed. Barnard, the wretch who had accompanied the Baron to the retreat of my
lost

lost Adela, was my jailor; and there did I witness the sun's annual courses, without one change, without a single ray of hope to lighten the horrors of confinement.

“I had the use of a well-stored library; for Barnard, more lenient than his employer, unknown to the Baron, allowed me this interval of sorrow; and with books, and the bitterness of reflection, did my hours pass. But alas! the mysterious fate of my wife and infant harrowed up my soul. In the darkness of night, I heard the shrieks of my beloved Adela—I heard her calling on De Rosencrantz—I saw her as at the moment of our separation, grasping our tender babe, and supplicating, in the frenzy of despair, mercy from her implacable father. Often were the silken bonds of sleep broken by exertion—often would I rush from my bed, and, gazing on the starry firmament of heaven, implore protection for my defenceless love! In vain I sought to soften the heart of Barnard—in vain I acquainted him with my agonies, and
intreated

intreated his compassion. He would hear me with the callous indifference of cruelty, and then leave the room, regardless of my solicitations. Once he entered into conversation; but it was only to inform me that my death was reported and believed; that the sword of banditti was the supposed cause of my murder; and that, for want of an heir, my title had become extinct, and my estates had devolved to the Crown. I shuddered at the information—I remembered thee, my child (tenderly taking the hand of Rosalthe), and wept at thy destitute prospect. Ah God, how bitter were the hours of confinement! how deep, how goading the reflections, tinged with melancholy and woe! Often would I gaze upon the rough surface of the Elbe, till reason and religion wavered—often would I rush to the opened casement, to precipitate myself into the abyss, to lose all my cares in the world of water! But a supernatural power withheld me, and whispered ‘that calamity warranted not the crime of self-

self-murder.' I fearfully drew back from the brink of destruction, sunk on my knees, and implored of Heaven pardon and resignation.

"Thus passed the lingering years of my confinement. Every third night Barnard visited me with a supply of provisions, and in the interim the stillness of death reigned. No distant sound — no social whisper of a human voice reached my ear; for by the express command of the Baron, the whole suite of apartments had been strongly secured, and within their precincts the foot of a domestic never wandered."

"Ah!" interrupted De Lindenthal, "now are the mysterious sounds which disturbed the repose of my friend elucidated."

He then recapitulated the events which had transpired during Adelbert's visit at the castle, and concluded with slightly passing over the displeasure of his father at their interrogatories.

"May

“May Heaven pardon him!” said the Count de Rosencrantz.

Sigismar sighed, and raised his eyes in pious supplication.

“On the morning of the Baron de Lunnberg’s arrival at the castle,” pursued the Count, “as I sat musing at my window, my head resting on my hand, and my eyes fixed on vacancy, the sound of the key turning in the lock, and the hollow grating occasioned by the removal of the heavy bars, filled me with wonder and expectation. Never in the glare of day had I received a visit from my jailor. I looked steadfastly at the door—it opened: breathing an exclamation of joy, I started from my chair at the sight of an elderly and respectable woman. She addressed me in the language of respect and compassion. She informed me that her name was Eldrude, and that she filled the situation of housekeeper to the Baron de Lindenthal.

‘Where

‘Where then is Barnard?’ I enquired, snatching the hand of this beneficent angel—for her heart felt my sorrows, and her eyes spoke participation.

‘Say,’ I continued, looking wistfully towards the door, ‘may I hope for liberty?’

‘Alas! I fear not from the Baron,’ she replied.

‘Does he continue inflexible?’ interrupting her.

‘I know not, my Lord.’

“I started at the appellation.

‘Barnard has told me all,’ pursued El-drude, reading surprise in my countenance; ‘I know that in my illustrious prisoner I behold the Count de Rosencrantz, the husband of the sainted Lady Adela.’

‘Sainted!’ I repeated; ‘ah God, have I lost her? Say, what then of my child?’

“Alas! the information I received plunged me deeper into woe. I found that the birth of my daughter had been carefully concealed from the world; and that the memory of my lost Adela was
alone

alone cherished in the breasts of those domestics who gratefully remembered her virtues. What could I expect, what could I hope from the obdurate heart of the Baron? I had for a long series of years groaned beneath his unabating vengeance, and fearfully trembled lest its weight had fallen upon those beings far dearer than existence.

‘The hand of death filled Barnard with remorse,’ continued Eldrude; ‘for the hour must come when the hardened sinner will look back with horror on his misdeeds, when the retributive hand of justice shall call aloud for vengeance, and the still voice of conscience sting him in the hour of fancied security—when the ghosts of the injured shall haunt his pillow, and chase from his wearied eyelids the healthful balm of rest. Ah, of what avail then are all the luxuries of life! of what avail the riches which have purchased the blessing innocence!’

“Such were the reflections of Eldrude
on

on the frailties of man; and mercy embalmed the tear which sprung from the source of humanity.

‘ Early this morning,’ she continued, ‘ as Barnard quitted the castle, a heavy stone, hurled by the wind from one of the turrets, felled him to the ground. The poor sufferer, unable to rise, groaned from excessive agony: his lamentations reached our ears; and ere we could support him to his chamber, the cold damp of death hung upon his forehead. Medical assistance was of no avail; his skull was dreadfully fractured, and life seemed quivering upon its latest cbb. He wished to speak to me alone; and no sooner was the room cleared, than, grasping my hand, and looking fearfully in my face—‘ Eldrude,’ he exclaimed, ‘ I have been a grievous sinner, and a visitation from an offended God is now upon me. I have been a pliant tool in the hands of iniquity; and in obedience to the unjust commands of a revengeful master, have renounced the dictates of humanity,

humanity, violated the laws of my Creator, and plunged my guilty soul into perdition. Oh Eldrude! I cannot tell thee all—kneel down and pray for me—my strength fails, my eyes grow dim, and the light of Heaven dazzles them. Pray for the pardon of an expiring sinner.'

'I knelt by his side; I endeavoured to speak composure to his disordered mind.

'Dost thou not acknowledge the mercy of Heaven?' I enquired.

'Yes, yes,' he quickly repeated; 'there lies the blackness of my guilt. I have sinned against conviction, and crushed the already fallen.'

'Are thy crimes beyond the reach of reparation?' I asked.

'No: these walls contain an injured nobleman, who, for these nineteen years, has been confined a prisoner.'

'He then pointed out the key, directed me to the prison, and gave a succinct account of the sufferings of the Count de Rosencrantz. Dreadful convulsions succeeded

ceeded (she continued), and in less than an hour, with a heavy struggle, his spirit fled.'

"Poor wretch!" interrupted the Lady Abbess; "may Heaven, for one act of mercy, pardon his offences!"

'Where then is the Baron de Lindenthal?' I enquired.

'He has been absent from the castle some days,' replied Eldrude, 'to forward an alliance between the Count Sigismar his son, and the daughter of the Baron de Lunenberg.'

Angela blushed—De Lindenthal sighed.

'How then dost thou mean to act?' I demanded (resumed the Count de Rosenkrantz).

'To give thee liberty, my Lord,' replied the noble-minded domestic.

'What! and endanger thy own safety?'

'No,' she answered, smiling at my apprehension, 'I will provide for the safety

of both, by informing the Count his son of the whole transaction. He is as humane as his father is——'

"Forbear, my Lord," interrupted De Lindenthal; "the Baron is no more, and henceforth let his name be sacred."

"Pardon me," rejoined the Count de Rosencrantz, addressing Sigismar; "though unknown, I blessed thee; for I found that thy feeling heart had often compassionated the sufferings of a persecuted sister."

The Count mournfully bowed, and De Rosencrantz proceeded.

"The controversy was soon terminated by the arrival of the Baron de Lunenberg; and from that joyful period the occurrences are too well known to require a recapitulation."

"Alas, my dearest father," said Rosalthe, gazing on the now serene features of the Count de Rosencrantz, "what years of an-

guish and regret hast thou experienced! Holy Virgin! how little did I think, when kneeling on the grave of my mother, and gazing on thy picture, that the revered original breathed his heart-rending sighs within the solitary and comfortless walls of a prison!"

"Would that every life of affliction, that every period of calamity, could terminate like mine!" replied her father; "then would the aspect of sorrow beam with the smile of returning peace—then might the tears of woe be chased away by the affectionate efforts of a darling child!"

"Happy, happy Rosalthe!" repeated his grateful daughter, taking a hand of the Lady Abbess and the Count, and pressing them tenderly to her lips; "blessed with such parents, never again will she murmur!"

Agatha looked towards her, and a tear trembled in her eye. Her adopted child
read

read her feelings; she dropped the hands she held, and flying to the cottagers, threw her arms around them.

“Thrice happy Rosalthe!” she exclaimed, in the faltering accents of sensibility; “Heaven has doubly blessed thee, in the affection of these dear, these tender, these first acknowledged parents.”

“Excellent child!” articulated the veteran.

“Happy moment!” murmured the dame; and each successively pressed her to their bosoms, and imprinted on her glowing cheek a rapturous kiss.

The Count de Rosencrantz started from his chair, hid his face in his handkerchief, and walked quickly to the window.

“The Virgin has heard my prayers,” said the delighted Agatha; “Jacquilina is restored to us; the mystery is unravelled; our beloved Rosalthe will be happy; the

rose of health will bloom upon her features, and content and peace will once more smile upon our dwelling. Oh Dusseldorf! never more need we tremble for the safety of our children. Heaven is all-sufficient, all-merciful; and our latter days will pass in bliss. The infirmities of age will steal unperceived upon us, and the chapel of St. Florensia——”

“*Shall be repaired, the altar-piece new painted, and devotional exercise renewed,*” interrupted Rosalthe, smiling upon the overjoyed dame.

“And all by the Countess de Lunenberg,” she replied; “for last night I dreamt——”

“Hush, hush, Agatha,” whispered Dusseldorf.

“And what was the dream, my good dame?” enquired the Baron de Lunenberg.

Agatha’s eyes sought the ground.

“Say,

“ Say, mother, what was it ? ” questioned the Lady Angela, “ for it concerns us all, if it relates to Rosalthe.”

Still was the dame silent; respect checked her utterance; she remembered the circle, and trembled at her own temerity.

“ But the dream, my good dame,” importuned the lively Angela; “ if thou art a true diviner, I shall often visit the cottage.”

“ Why dost thou not answer ? ” again whispered her husband.

“ Last night I dreamt,” she at length articulated, “ that we all were happy; and methinks the occurrences of the day verify it.”

“ True,” said the Count de Rosencrantz, “ thou art a just predictor.

Rosalthe looked around the apartment: one was wanting, and a heavy sigh contradicted the assertion.

"Would that Adelbert was here to share our happiness," observed Angela, in a low voice to her friend.

"Think but a moment," replied Rosalthe, and a mantling blush dyed her features, "think but of the tie which binds me, and that wish cannot be repeated."

"True," she answered, with great warmth, "but I wish with all my heart the monopolizer of my brother's rights was dead; and if it was not called murder to kill a thief, methinks I could do it myself."

Rosalthe pressed her hand in silence.

"Providence will yet complete the work," said the dame; "trust me, Lady, oppression will cease, and we shall all be happy."

"Think me not importunate, holy mother," said the Count de Rosencrantz, addressing the superior, "in hinting a wish to know by what means the revered parent of my departed Adela, long since mourned

as

as dead, should still be in existence—should miraculously be discovered in the friend and benefactress of her supposed orphan.”

“ It is a painful effort,” she replied, chasing a truant tear from her cheek, “ but it is an effort which necessity and affection requires. Once there existed a tie which silenced me to the intreaties of Rosalthe ; but in the death of the Baron de Lindenthal, that tie is broken, and honour no longer enforces secrecy. The same moment which opened to her the knowledge of an existing parent, dissolved my vow, and enabled me to relate my story. Yet I could wish the indulgence of a few hours—I could wish, ere I recapitulate the scenes of past happiness, of past sorrow, to subdue the strong emotion which the discoveries of this day have excited—to regain the blessed calm which devotion had impressed upon my soul. This night, after the mass which will be solemnized for the soul of the departed De Lindenthal, I will

pass in prayer, and to-morrow (rising from her seat), at this hour, when we all are thus assembled, the veil shall be withdrawn, and the tale of my sufferings recited."

"Stay," said the Count de Rosenkrantz, as the Lady Abbess approached the door; "but one request, and I ask no more. May I not visit the hallowed grave of my Adela? I could wish (and he pressed the hand of Rosalthe), accompanied by my daughter, to embalm the sacred spot with a tear—I could wish to gaze upon the marble which encloses her—to press my lips to the senseless stone!"

"Follow the dictates of thy heart, my Lord," replied the superior, in faltering accents; "but let not the violence of affliction subdue the force of reason. Remember that Adela, dead to us, is likewise dead to sorrow—remember that the moment which terminates the sufferings of the virtuous, commences the glorious career of unfading beatitude! The chapel is clear;

clear; the sisterhood have met in the refectory. Go, Rosalthe, attend thy father; and in thee may he picture a smiling source of future peace."

The Abbess sighed—she drew her veil over her face, and quitted the parlour.

"Thy prayer is heard," holy mother, replied De Rosencrantz; "already does my widowed heart, inspired by the warm fervour of parental love, dive through the gloomy darkness of fate, and hail the refulgent beams of returning contentment."

He snatched the hand of his daughter, and suppressing a sigh, sacred to former sorrows, was by her conducted to the chapel.

CHAP. VII.

“THE hour is arrived,” said the Lady Abbess, as the party which had met the preceding day assembled in the parlour, and waited the promised recital, “for me to retrace the paths of peace, and note the chilling blasts of disappointment. The task is severe, but my children require the effort. Heaven has blessed me with renovated fortitude, and their desire shall be fulfilled.

“The years of my infancy passed swiftly away : no sorrows marked their progress—no cares tinctured my mind with thought.

Like the still calm of the pellucid stream, on which the sun dancing reflects its dazzling splendour, deceitful Hope pictured happiness, and vanished—as when a heavy cloud rolling o’er the glorious orb, obscures its rays, and leaves the face of nature gloomy and desponding. I smiled upon a father’s love, and his anxieties were requited—I caressed him in the warmth of infancy, and he sought no other pleasure. Gazing on the heiress of his princely fortune, the Baron de Stellenheim defied the power of beauty or the shafts of wit. In death he had lost the fondly-selected partner of his heart; and though widowed in the ardour of youth, relinquished, for the sake of his Beatrice, all ideas of a second engagement.

“ From the arms of this indulgent parent, I would fly to sport on the lawn with my beloved companion, my cherished play-fellow, Hubert de Kronenfeld—the fondling of my father’s bounty, the noble, the undisguised favourite of my heart. He

was four years my senior, was the redressor of my fancied grievances, the cheerful promoter of my pleasures, the confidant of my little secrets; and when he left me to complete his studies at Dresden, my regret was deep as it was sincere. Alas! we loved ere we knew the meaning of the word; in the intercourse of unrestrained confidence, we had imbibed a passion, which, mingling with the stream of life, poisoned each revolving hour.

“ I visited the haunts we had explored together—I looked wistfully on the lake in which he used to angle, and dropped a tear on the margin, because it reflected his image no longer. The myrtle bower reared by his hands, was dear to my unconscious heart; for there I could sigh forth the name of Hubert, and enrich the bark with the initials of his name. I pictured his return with an emotion I vainly endeavoured to resolve. To appear beautiful in his eyes, I studied to excel in the elegancies of accomplishments. I persevered
with

with unabating attention in the pleasing imagery of the pencil, because it was an art which De Kronenfeld had often extolled. Ah, never shall I forget the exultation of the moment, when the features so deeply engraven on my heart were delineated on the paper—when I saw the eyes now lost in absence, turned full upon me, and traced in every finished line the resemblance of Hubert.

“ My delighted father hailed the work of genius—little did he think it was the work of love! The miniature was richly set, and sparkled on my arm; but trifling were the gems, compared to the precious portrait; in that lay hid all that imagination could conceive of value, and my eyes would rest upon it, till every varying colour mingled into one. The set was incomplete—a companion was wanting—I thought of my father—but why should my father’s picture be the partner of Hubert’s? The brush trembled in my hand—my heart dictated.

dictated—and my own likeness became the correspondent.”

The Abbess paused—a heavy sigh burst from her labouring bosom—and her eyes rested on the bracelet which now encircled the arm of Rosalthe.

“ In fanning the flame of infant passion, the hours glided away,” she continued, “ and the long looked for, long ardently expected period of De Kronenfeld’s return arrived. I met him with a tremulous, palpable emotion ; my cheeks were pale, but his tender salutation thrilled my heart, and painted them with deepening scarlet. My father traced not the source of our feelings. He received him with the steady warmth of friendship, praised his improved person, and dwelt on the past joyful sports of childhood.

‘ And is not the little laughter-loving Beatrice mightily transformed ? ’ said my father ;

father ; ‘ look at her, Hubert, and tell me whether thou canst trace any resemblance to thy loved companion ?’

“ De Kronenfeld sighed.

‘ She has not forgotten thee,’ he continued, looking on my arm ; ‘ ah gipsy, what hast thou done with the bracelet ?’

“ It was the first time I had omitted wearing it. Conscious of I knew not what, I had carefully hid it next my heart, on the expected arrival of the original.

‘ Go fetch it, Beatrice ; I wish Hubert to see the proficiency thou hast acquired in painting.’

“ I quitted the room, reluctantly removed the senseless image from my bosom, and returned with it to the apartment. Hubert started ; a momentary glow tinged his features ; his hand trembled as he held the bracelet ; and his eyes were fixed upon me.

‘ Gracious Heaven !’ he murmured.

“ The Baron smiled.

‘ Thou

‘Thou art astonished, boy.’

‘I am indeed, my lord.’

‘This is not all,’ resumed my delighted father; ‘there is a companion. Where is thy own portrait, Beatrice?’

‘Ah, let me see the *companion* to *my* likeness,’ eagerly petitioned De Kronenfeld.

“He snatched it from me, and regardless of the presence of my father, pressed it to his lips.

‘Why Hubert,’ said the Baron, laughing, ‘methinks thou art as great a proficient in gallantry as Beatrice is in painting.’

“Thus,” sighed the superior, “was the secret revealed to each other; and in a fleeting month, in the myrtle bower, reserve fled, Hubert poured forth his love, and my lips acknowledged a return. The bracelet which contained my miniature, I clasped around the arm of my lover, and received, with rapturous delight, the blessed meed of his praise. But suddenly the peaceful

peaceful calm of happiness fled from his countenance. He started—he gazed fearfully upon me.

‘Dare I hint my presumption to the Baron?’ he exclaimed; ‘dare I acknowledge that the orphan of his bounty, heedless of respect, situation, gratitude, has raised his eyes to the heiress of his honours—has whispered love—has thus returned his kindness? Say, Beatrice, how can I stand before him? how can I bear his frown?’

‘Tell him, Hubert,’ I replied, ‘that the happiness of his daughter’s life depends upon his sanction—tell him how long and how ardently we have loved—tell him that in infancy we imbibed a passion which the grave alone can terminate; and if then he hesitates, we will together kneel at his feet, nor rise till he grants a pardon.’

“Relying on the tenderness, on the indulgence of my parent, I pictured not a doubt of his acquiescence; I thought not of the pride of birth, the distinctions of rank

rank—I thought alone of Hubert's merit, and wished to reward it.

‘Yes, beloved De Kronenfeld,’ I exclaimed, as I impatiently awaited the conference, ‘soon will thy doubts end—soon will my father receive thee as his son, as the husband of his Beatrice.’

“Alas, how deadly was Hope's deceitful ray! how transient its period of happiness! how bitter the transition to sorrow! I beheld my father quit the apartment; he tottered—he was scarce able to stand: I flew to him; he spoke not, he looked mournfully at me, threw his arms around my neck, and burst into a flood of tears.

‘What means my father?’ I enquired. ‘Say, dearest, best of parents, what am I to presage? Where is Hubert?’

“The Baron shuddered—he clasped his hands.

‘Name him not, Beatrice,’ he exclaimed; ‘this hour he quits the castle, and returns not until every vestige of passion is banished.’

“A heavy

“ A heavy chill pressed upon my heart ;— my eyes closed, my senses yielded to insensibility. On reviving, I found my father weeping over me : he strained me to his heart—he implored me to listen to the voice of reason. I turned from him—I gazed eagerly around the room—my eyes encountered not the object they sought. I started to fly from the apartment—my father withheld me—I uttered a shriek of horror, and De Kronenfeld rushed into the chamber.

‘ Oh fatal, fatal confidence!’ murmured the Baron, throwing himself between us.

“ He sunk on his knees—he extended his hand towards me.

‘ Beatrice! my darling child! my daughter! look upon thy unhappy father! see him bending at thy feet a humble suppliant—see his bleached locks, his furrowed features! think, think of thy father kneeling!’

‘ Ah God!’ ejaculated Hubert, throwing himself

himself by his side ; ‘ my benefactor, my friend, my patron ! ’

‘ Forbear, young man,’ said the Baron, in a voice of severity ; ‘ think not to change my resolves ; Beatrice never shall — never can be thine.’

“ Hubert sprung from his knees—a latent glow of pride flushed his cheek—and a momentary ray of resentment darted from his eyes.

‘ I have her heart,’ he exclaimed, ‘ and for that would I not exchange a diadem.’

‘ Swear to renounce him, Beatrice, or— or’—bursting into tears.

‘ Or what, my father?’ throwing myself on his neck.

‘ Or thou wilt kill me. Rash, inconsiderate being that I was,’ continued my father, looking wildly upon us, ‘ to hazard the possibility — ill-fated, injured pair ! kneel down and curse me.’

‘ Bless thee!’ articulated Hubert, rushing from the apartment.

“ I spoke

“ I spoke not. Fixed as a statue, I gazed upon my parent—my hands clasped in prayer, and my bosom convulsively heaving. It was night ere the full powers of recollection were restored ; and when I first distinguished objects, I found myself on my bed, and my father watching over me. A shower of tears came to my relief, and my mind felt lightened of its oppression. Hubert had withdrawn from the castle, and no vestige could we discover of his retreat : but my heart attended the solitary wanderer, and accompanied him in all the haunts of his despair. In vain my father attempted to recall past cheerfulness—in vain he strove to soothe my sorrow ; a melancholy smile was the forced tribute of his cares, was the sad and only effort my desponding spirits could exert.

“ The bracelet, torn from my arm, was now the only companion to my bosom : to it in secret I poured forth my grief, and gazed upon it until imagination gave it life. ‘ One evening, as in the myrtle bower
I pressed

I pressed it to my lips, and dimmed the crystal with my tears, I heard the name of 'Beatrice' softly pronounced. My soul vibrated at the sound—it was the voice of De Kronenfeld. I started—I gazed anxiously around, trembling at the prospect of beholding him, yet dreading lest fancy had deceived me. Alas, it was no illusion; Hubert pressed through the clustering branches of the shrubbery, and clasped me to his bosom.

' 'Tis in vain we seek to counteract destiny,' said he; 'life, banished from thy presence, my Beatrice, is a fearful blank. For many weeks have I sustained the burden—have I buried my anguish in my own heart; but the voice of sorrow is clamorous, and despair has brought me hither. I revere thy father. If existence could repay the debt of gratitude, cheerfully would I renounce it. But to leave thee in sorrow—to know that thy tender bosom echoes every sigh of mine—to know that thy nights are sleepless, and thy days devoid

void of peace, is beyond the power of endurance—is a pang which reason cannot sustain. Say then, Beatrice, pronounce at once my doom: from thy clemency what am I to expect? what am I to hope?’

“The plea was aimed at a weak, a yielding advocate—it was aimed at my heart: and before we parted, I promised to repeat the interview—I promised to become his bride.

‘And then,’ said the delighted Hubert, ‘we will kneel at the feet of the Baron, nor rise till enriched with his blessing.’

“I returned more cheerful to the castle; but no sooner did I behold my father, than I sighed at the clandestine step I was about to take. Conscience condemned this requital of his affection. I longed to throw myself into his arms, to disclose the secret, and supplicate his concurrence. But I remembered his inflexibility, and trembled—I remembered the scene when De Kronenfeld revealed his passion, and silence sealed my lips.

“The

“ The following evening we met in the myrtle bower, and there a well-concerted plan was formed for our union. In the morning we were to repair to a small chapel about half a mile from the castle; and there a priest, engaged by Hubert, was to consecrate our love. Alas! how slow did the moments pass! sleep weighed not down my eyelids, and a deep foreboding gloom hung upon me. I arose from my couch—I paced the chamber—I looked fearfully from the window. The heavy clouds rolled over the silver light of Heaven, and sullen stillness reigned around. No cheerful star twinkled in the arched concave; for Nature’s self seemed to droop. I watched and wept—I thought of my father—I thought of Hubert—I retraced the blissful scenes of my infancy—I kissed the beloved bracelet, and bedewed it with my tears.

“ Soon did the pale gleam of day peep from the east, and gradually chase the vapours of night from the adjacent hills. The sun rose in splendor, and tinged the verdant

verdant landscape with his glorious rays. The birds carolled their matin song of gratitude, and soared aloft in air. But still did the same depression hang upon my spirits—still did the same cold weight press heavy at my heart. I strove to regain composure—I pictured happiness—I thought of a father's pardon—of a lover's bliss. The signal was given; I heard the well-known step of Hubert—I heard his well-known voice whisper 'Beatrice.' I waved my hand—he departed—he concealed himself in the shrubbery: I hastened from the castle and joined him—I trembled, my cheeks were colourless, my eyes swollen—I was scarce able to stand. He smiled at my apprehensions—he besought me to banish fear—he sustained me in his arms, and thus supported, soon did we reach the chapel.

“The priest awaited, clad in sacred vestments; the holy page was opened; Hubert seized my hand—‘My Beatrice,’ he
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whispered, 'sanctify thy vow, and give me a right to claim thee.'

"His features glowed with the certainty of exultation—with the joy of confidence. He led me to the altar, and we stood ready in the sight of Heaven to plight our faith. The priest prepared to read; my eyes rested upon him, and my heart palpitated with a tremulous emotion. Fear fled—love, hope, and happiness remained; but short was the transport—a hasty step broke upon the stillness; I turned to the door, and beheld my father, pale, trembling, dismayed, rush into the chapel. De Kronenfeld, breathing an exclamation of horror, snatched me to his bosom, and looked defiance.

'Proceed!' he exclaimed, addressing the friar, in an authoritative voice; 'Beatrice is mine; and a father's power shall not wrest her from me.'

'Forbear, forbear!' articulated my father; 'ye know not what ye do; 'tis incest
—'tis

—'tis—ah God!' sobbing, and almost convulsed—'ye are both my children—brother, sister.'

"Powerless the arms of Hubert resigned me—he spoke not—he tottered a few paces—he breathed a heavy groan, and sunk, pale, stiff, and cold, as the marble which received him."

The Abbess paused—the bursting sigh checked utterance: she rose from her chair, drew her veil over her face, and slowly paced the apartment. Rosalthe's eyes, streaming with the drops of commiseration, followed her. Suddenly she thought of her own marriage, and clung terrified to her father. The superior retook her seat, composure was restored, and in a steady voice she proceeded:—

"My senses did not forsake me; I beheld the anguish of my father—I saw him kiss the forehead of his lifeless son—I saw him tear his gray locks, and, frantic with

grief, deprecate the shame which had checked his utterance.

‘ My Hubert!’ he exclaimed; ‘ my suffering, murdered son!’

‘ Murdered!’ I repeated, wildly shrieking, and throwing myself by his side—
‘ Hubert, awake—it is thy Beatrice who calls thee.’

“ My arms were thrown around him—my cheek was pressed on his—‘ Murdered—my—has—ah no, no—my brother!’

‘ Hapless, ill-fated children!’ continued the Baron; ‘ ’tis I, ’tis their father, who has destroyed them.’

“ Hubert revived—he gazed steadfastly upon me.

‘ Sister!’ he ejaculated, fearfully shuddering.

“ He sprung from the ground—he attempted to quit the chapel.

‘ Whither, Hubert, art thou going?’ enquired the alarmed Baron.

‘ To shut out the light of day,’ he replied;

plied; 'to obliterate this horrid scene from memory—to renounce for ever my father, my sister—to—to—die'—and again he sunk motionless in the arms of my father.

“For many days the valued life of De Kronenfeld was despaired of. Scorched with fever, he raved incessantly upon the fatal close of his hopes, and pathetically called upon his suffering sister. Every exclamation of despair was attributed to delirium; for the dreadful discovery was carefully concealed from the unsuspecting world. I dared not approach the apartment of my brother, lest, thrown off my guard, I should breathe the lamentations of my soul, and disclose at once the tale of horror.

“The Baron quitted me but to visit Hubert. He watched over me with the tenderest solicitude, with the most endearing attention. He endeavoured to steal my thoughts from the indulgence of woe, to solace them with affection. But the wound

was too deep—it could admit of no immediate palliative, and sighs and tears were the sad requitals of his care. He wished me to leave the castle—he wished to tear me from the scene of my sorrows, in the hope that change would restore peace: but every argument failed; for not until the life of my brother was pronounced in safety, would I agree to his arrangements.

“ The morning of my departure, unknown to my father, I stole to the chamber of De Kronenfeld: it was a mournful gratification which my heart dictated. I knew that he slept—I knew that, from the power of medicine, my sobs could not awake him: it was a sad indulgence; but I could not quit the castle without taking a last farewell—without imploring the mercy of Heaven upon him, and pouring my blessing in his wounded heart.

“ Ah, sad and mournful adieu!” sighed the superior, wiping a truant tear from her cheek. After a pause she continued—

“ I trembled

“ I trembled as I approached the couch: pale was his countenance, disturbed his sleep; his arm supported his head, and his colourless lips pressed upon the miniature which glittered on his wrist.

‘ Father of Heaven!’ I murmured, bending over him, ‘ restore to this beloved, this fatally-concealed brother, the blessing of health! Teach his firm mind submissively to bow to thy decision—teach him to forget the unhappy Beatrice, or at least teach him ever to remember in her a sister.’

“ While yet I gazed upon him, a tear forced its way through the closed lid, and trickled down his cheek. His lips murmured an indistinct sound, and impressed a kiss on the inanimate picture.

‘ It is corrosive poison to thy heart,’ I sighed; ‘ yes, Hubert, that portrait, once the silent pledge of my affection, shall be thine no longer. I will steal the fatal gift, which now fans incestuous love, and defies the balm of peace—I will hide it for

ever from thy eyes, and may the theft prove the foundation of content.'

"I gently touched the spring—he heard me not—and with increasing confidence drew it softly away. Still was he lost in sleep—I stood for some minutes by his side—my grief became clamourous—and stifling my sobs, I precipitately left the apartment.

"In less than an hour, we quitted the castle; and for two years I shunned society, and courted the gloom of contemplation. During that space I saw not Hubert, but sometimes I heard of his welfare. He had embraced the profession of arms; for his country claimed the courage of her sons, and in the din of battle he sought renown. I shrunk at the deadly horrors through which the path of glory leads. I remembered that the damp earth was often the pillow of the hero, the starry firmament his canopy—I remembered that cold, fatigue, and hunger exhausted his strength—
—that

—that he dragged through whole weeks of misery, and perhaps fell at last, mangled, bleeding, among the undistinguished slain.

‘ Oh Hubert! dearest brother! would that I could share thy dangers! would that I could soothe thy cares!’

“ Such were the complaints I breathed forth in secret: but my father heard them not, and hailed returning peace.

“ It was at Dresden I first beheld the Baron de Lindenthal. Pleased with the faded lustre of my charms, he whispered love; but the sound was discord to my ears, and dismayed I shunned the tale. Armed with every charm to gain the heart, and versed in the subtle wiles of love, he heeded not my denial, but insinuated himself into the esteem, the approbation, of my father; and by perseverance gained the boon he asked. I became his wife; but my heart never wavered; alas, no! still did it beat for Hubert, with an emotion which the study of my life could not suppress. I felt esteem, I felt respect for

my husband ; but, ah Heaven ! how inadequate are those to ensure happiness !

“ The hour arrived for me to tear myself from the bosom of my father. It was the first separation, and then did I feel the sacrifice I had made. Every past sorrow was renewed, every former pang embittered—the name of De Kronenfeld trembled on my lips, and scarce could the presence of my husband restrain it.

“ We reached Lindenthal Castle — its gloomy stillness suited the habit of my soul, and fed the worm of melancholy. I spoke not of my ill-fated brother—it was the only concealment I preserved, for I dared not trust myself with the subject. Alas, I felt that my full heart would betray its feelings. Jealousy marked the disposition of the Baron, and the discovery of our love might be stamped with vengeance.

“ In a few-months my heart imbibed new ideas ; it beat with a strong and undescribable sensation—a sensation which words cannot

cannot delineate, which experience alone can feel. I had become a mother; and my tender cherub, my darling Adela, smiled on my tears, and filled me anew with hope. The image of Hubert became more faint—I thought of him as of a brother, fondled my child, and pictured happiness. But short were the hours of content. The Baron fancied cold indifference the return of his affection: his love diminished, suspicion succeeded, and gradually swelled into contempt. I saw myself neglected, scorned—I saw his eyes wander from object to object, his heart estranged; but I concealed my injuries from the knowledge of my father; in his presence I wore the smile of happiness, while the thorn of misery rankled in my bosom. Deceived by this tacit show of content, he gloried in the supposed triumph I had gained over past disappointment, and exulted in the bliss of his child. He spoke not of De Kronenfeld; alas! his very recollection

was swept from memory, and my heart felt too conscious to recall it.

“ A long, long blank succeeded—for never again did the ray of cheerfulness dawn. My Adela ran about the chamber, and her sportive gambols often called forth a smile, when the death of my beloved father left me solely to the mercy of De Lindenthal. Deep were my regrets and lamentations; but religion whispered that this dreaded debt of nature was but the passport to the virtuous from trial to bliss. I bowed to Heaven's mandate, and Hope rested on my child. For her sake, I submitted to the caprices of the Baron: still was he madly suspicious of his honour; and though he took not the pains to conceal his own irregularities—though he shunned the society of his wife and daughter—yet he expected not only respect, but tenderness. Alas! love is but a tottering basis to sustain the hopes of lasting happiness; transient, short-lived in its nature,

ture,

ture, unless supported by esteem and confidence, it becomes insipid, cold, and, with the charm of novelty, expires! The rose of beauty was prematurely faded—the form, once the flattered standard of perfection, bent beneath the chilling blast of sorrow, and appeared but the fragile shadow of the once happy, pampered Beatrice!

“The Baron saw the change, but felt it not; and for whole weeks absenting himself from the castle, left me to all the horrors of a deserted wife. I thought of Hubert, until the indifference of the Baron was forgotten, nay, until I called it bliss. Dangerous was the sophistry of love: I called him brother—I dreamt not of guilt—and often, with the confidence of a sister, gazed on the dear, the long-cherished bracelet, which contained his likeness.

“One evening, as my Adela slumbered peacefully on the couch, I stood by the opened window, perusing the lineaments: imagination took wing, and retraced for-

mer hours—the bracelet trembled in my hand, my eyes rested on it, and the tears stole swiftly down my cheeks. I forgot where I was—again my father lived, and fancy pictured the scene, when, in the chapel, he threw off all disguise, and acknowledged us both his children.

‘Unhappy, suffering Hubert! lost, ill-fated Beatrice!’ I murmured.

“The Baron de Lindenthal entered: he stole softly towards me, witnessed my emotion, and glowed with jealous rage. I knew not that I was observed; till, snatching the treasured portrait from my hand, he hurled it from the window into the Elbe; the dark waves closed over it, and I beheld it no more.

‘Dissembler! hypocrite! adultress!’ he exclaimed; ‘thus under the garb of virtue to cherish a licentious passion! Name the original of that picture—name the villain who has robbed me of honour, or tremble at a husband’s vengeance.’

“I was unable to answer—I looked like
one.

one blasted by a bolt from Heaven ; terror, not shame, checked my utterance, and I clung to the window for support.

‘ In that conscious blush I trace the flush of guilt,’ he pursued, in threatening accents ; ‘ name thy seducer, infamous woman, or——’

“ The violence of passion broke the bands of sleep. Adela, terrified at the voice of her father, uttered a piercing shriek. Every apprehension yielded to the fear of her safety. I paused not, but, flying to the couch, snatched her to my bosom. The Baron muttered a heavy curse, and rushed from the apartment.

“ For three days I saw him not, and on the fourth, as I walked alone in the shrubbery, a stranger hastened towards me, breathed the name of ‘ Beatrice,’ threw off the roquelo which concealed him, and called me ‘ sister.’ It was De Kronenfeld. A momentary faintness succeeded the discovery, and but for his supporting arm, I must have fallen.

‘ I am

‘ I am come, my sister,’ he said, when the violent emotion of astonishment, regret, and terror had subsided, ‘ to bid thee adieu, to take a last sad farewell, to tear myself from thee. To-morrow I leave Germany, perhaps for ever : yet, ere I go, one boon, one only boon I ask. Thou hast a bracelet—nay, do not tremble—the theft I soon discovered : restore the dear treasure to my care, and death alone shall wrest it from me. Think ’tis a brother’s last request—a brother who loves thee, Beatrice—who loves, ah God of Heaven, I cannot tell how much ! who, in the last deep gasp of death, will breathe thy name, and smile if thou art happy.’

‘ Hubert, thy request I dare not grant ; ’tis the lover, not the brother, who solicits. Go, leave me ; may glory attend thy steps, may victory crown thy endeavours ! but henceforth we must not meet.’

“ I was hurrying from him ; he caught my hand, he sunk on his knees.

‘ Stay, stay, my sister,’ he implored, ‘ for
many

many days have I hovered round the castle—have I sought this interview. Short is a moment in our lives, and 'tis the only moment of bliss I can ever experience. Stay and tell me thou art content, thou art happy. I thought I had framed my heart to its duty; but it is turbulent and ungovernable. Give me the bracelet, and I will leave thee—it is on my knees that I intreat. Ah, Beatrice, relent, think of my misery—think of my bursting heart—think of my years of anguish—think of my madness, my despair, my disappointment—think, ah Heaven! (and his eyes gazed wildly on me) that thou canst yield me comfort. Give me the bracelet, and I will call thee sister.'

"I heard the sound of approaching footsteps—I struggled in vain to withdraw my hand.

'Fly, Hubert,' I articulated; 'suspicion rests upon me; fly, and save my fame from calumny.'

'No, I will stay to guard thee, Beatrice.'

"The

“ The Baron rushed forward ; fury darted from his eyes ; his sword was drawn ; he aimed it at the heart of De Kronenfeld. I flew between them, and the sharp point pierced my bosom. I fell upon the earth, a heavy mist rolled before my eyes, the shades of death, so often courted, seemed to envelop me, and husband, brother, were alike forgotten.

“ When returning life reanimated my senses, I found myself on a couch in a strange apartment. Barnard, the confidential attendant of the Baron, was seated by my side. Faint and exhausted, I looked towards him, and my trembling lips articulated ‘ Adela.’ He answered not, but methought I could trace pity in his countenance. For many days I reclined, scarcely conscious of what passed about me ; but Nature successfully struggled, and strength gradually returned.

“ The Baron one night entered my apartment. I shuddered when I beheld him, and turned my eyes scornfully away.

I recol-

I recollected my child, and pride yielded to affection.

‘How is my darling Adela?’

“He answered not.

‘Speak, De Lindenthal,’ I continued, ‘and relieve a mother’s anguish. Does she feel my loss? does she speak of her unfortunate parent?’

‘She knows her parent’s guilt,’ he replied, ‘and scorns thee as I do.’

‘Say not so,’ I exclaimed; ‘thy accusation is unfounded; Heaven can testify my innocence.’

‘Innocence!’ he sneeringly repeated; ‘the bracelet can witness the unblemished chastity of my wife.’

‘Misguided man! thou knowest not what thou sayest: that portrait was the resemblance of a brother.’

‘’Tis false,’ he answered, starting, and approaching the door; ‘I will not believe thee.’

“I rushed to him—I grasped his arm—I sunk on my knees—I implored him to lead

lead me to my child. He spurned me from him. I shrieked.

‘Barbarian! monster!’ I exclaimed, in the agony of the moment; ‘may Heaven in thy last hours visit thee with the pangs by which I am tortured!’

“From this period I never again beheld him. Barnard visited me daily, and endeavoured to soothe my distraction. He informed me that the Lady Adela was shortly to be sent to a monastery for education—that the Baron, now absent from the castle, had stigmatised my name, by spreading a report of my infidelity—that it was whispered, but believed by few, that I had fled with my seducer from Saxony—that the household, nay the vassals, murmured, but dared not espouse my cause.

‘Holy Virgin! what then is to be my fate?’ I exclaimed.

‘To linger here, lady,’ he replied, ‘and to die.’

“I shuddered.

‘Ah

‘ Ah Heaven ! hast thou a heart ? canst thou behold my anguish, and not pity ? ’

‘ Think of the Baron, think of my life, lady, and canst thou blame me ? ’

‘ I do, I do—yet save me from his vengeance. ’

“ He paused.

‘ Perhaps,’ I continued, ‘ the result will be murder. ’

‘ Mercy forbid ! ’ interrupted Barnard. ‘ Methinks I have hit upon an expedient : to-night I will think of the practicability, and to-morrow I will disclose it. ’

“ He quitted me, and impatiently did I await the morrow.

‘ Thou must die to the world,’ said Barnard, as he stood before me.

“ I started.

‘ It is the only possible means of saving thee,’ he continued ; ‘ in the convent of St. Florensia thou must immure thyself for ever ; thou must swear never while thy husband lives to breathe the secret—never to
acknowledge

acknowledge the existence of Beatrice, Baroness de Lindenthal.'

'I looked enquiringly at him.

'I will tell the Baron that the consequences of thy wound occasioned death—that I saw thee expire, and buried thee secretly in the vaults of the castle. My assertion will be believed, and thou mayest rest securely in thy asylum.'

'But my child!' I exclaimed, bursting into tears; 'all-seeing Heaven, must I renounce her? must I never behold her more? must I never receive her tender caresses, never again hush her on my bosom?'

'Never, unfortunate lady,' interrupted Barnard; 'if in the castle thou remainest—if to the Baron's vengeance thou exposeth thyself, beyond this apartment thou canst not wander; and thy daughter, unconscious of thy existence, beneath the same roof, will be lost to thee. In the monastery thou mayest securely rest; thou mayest

mayest pour forth thy prayers for the welfare of thy offspring, and defy the malice of thy lord.'

"I paused: long and painful was the struggle my heart sustained: at length I assented to the plan proposed, solemnly vowed never within the time prescribed to divulge the secret, and that night, accompanied by Barnard, quitted the castle.

"Ere my departure, taking the fatal bracelet (which I had refused to Hubert, and which, from containing the resemblance of her mother, would be doubly endeared to my child), I enclosed it in an envelope, and, entrusting it to the charge of Barnard, obtained his promise to give it into the hands of the Lady Adela.

"In security I reached St. Florensia's cloister, took the veil, and renounced for ever all intercourse with the world. But often, when with bended knees I gazed on the altar, did the remembrance of my motherless child occasion in my breast a pang,

pang, which convinced me that the force of nature could never be subdued by the fervour of religion.

“ In this living death many years elapsed. The aged and respected Abbess died, and, going through the accustomed forms, I was invested with the dignities of Superior. But still did my heart pant to know the fate of my child—still did it throb with a sickening sorrow, which time could not soften ! A tale of woe was related by the peasant Dusseldorf. I felt a secret, an undescribable interest excited ; I wished to see the suffering stranger, if possible to relieve her agonies. Her situation was too dangerous to admit of her removal to the convent ; and availing myself of the lenient rules of our order, I returned with him to the cottage. Ah, judge of my agony, when I beheld the fatal bracelet—when I beheld my daughter ! She knew me not, for death had already frozen the powers of recognition.”

The

The Abbess wept, and with a heavy sigh continued: -

“Adela expired; my long-lost darling escaped the sorrows of this world, and her chaste spirit bent its way to Heaven. Rosalthe, her orphaned infant, became my cherished, tender charge; and in tutoring her mind to virtue, peace, so long banished, resumed her mild influence in my breast; and Hope claimed for an anchor, a beloved affectionate grandchild.”

CHAP. VIII.

ON the morning appointed for the removal of the body of the late Baron de Lindenthal from the convent, for interment in the family vault, while yet the procession, in solemn and pompous order, prepared to depart—while the hearse was decorating with armorial bearings, and the horses nodded with sable plumes—a stranger paused at the gate, and enquired for the daughter of Dusseldorf.

“Who seeks Rosalthe?” questioned the Baron de Lunenberg, as he was entering the carriage, accompanied by Sigismar,
now

now Baron de Lindenthal, to attend to the silent grave the *manes* of his departed father.

“A friend,” replied the stranger, “who visits the convent to free the *Bandit's Bride*—to announce the death of Hildebrand, the husband of Rosalthe.”

The Baron started.

“Tell her my name is Wilhelm,” he continued; “tell her I bring intelligence will make her heart rejoice, will restore the cherub peace to her long-tortured bosom.”

“Rosalthe, the *Bandit's Bride*, released!” said the Baron; “then will my son be happy.”

He paused not; he rushed into the parlour; he thought not of Wilhelm; he thought alone of the absent Adelbert.

“ This instant shall an-express be dispatched,” he exclaimed; “ would that I could go myself! I envy the being who conveys the joyful account.”

“ Whither wouldst thou go? what means my father?” enquired the astonished Angela.

“ To Vienna, child,” replied her father; “ Rosalthe is free—her husband Hildebrand is dead.”

Rosalthe sprung from her chair, clasped her hands, and threw herself half fainting on the bosom of her father.

“ Who brings the news, my Lord?” asked the superior; “ surely the stranger should have been conducted hither.”

“ His name is Wilhelm,” he replied.

“ Wilhelm!” repeated the agitated Rosalthe; “ my friend, my adviser! ah, let me see him—let me greet him with my thanks!”

“ I will

"I will speak to the defender of my child," said the Count de Rosencrantz, rising to quit the parlour.

"And I," said the Baron de Lunenberg, "ere I depart from St. Florensia, will dispatch an express to Vienna."

Rosalthe blushed.

"Happy, happy Adelbert!" exclaimed Angela.

"Ah, Lady," said the delighted Agatha, "I knew we should all feel joy."

"But, my Lord," observed the Lady Abbess, rising, "the mournful assemblage awaits thy presence."

"True," answered the Baron; "but the living, holy mother, have stronger claims. In a few moments I will attend."

He snatched a pen, and hastily wrote the following words:

“Return to Saxony, my son; Rosalthe is freed from every engagement, but her affection for thee.”

Which carefully sealing, he entrusted to one of his domestics, with a strict injunction immediately to repair to Vienna, nor pause until he had delivered it into the hands of the Count Adelbert. Again did the Baron embrace his daughters; for already as one did he claim Rosalthe; and bidding them adieu, ere the Count de Rosencrantz and Wilhelm entered the parlour, the procession moved in solemn state from St. Florensia.

“Death here too has been busy,” remarked Wilhelm, as he crossed the courtyard.

“It has indeed,” replied the Count.

“Who under yon sable pall lies slumbering?” he enquired.

“The

"The Baron de Lindenthal," returned the Count, opening the door of the parlour.

"Prophetic Heaven! the Baron de Lindenthal!" ejaculated Wilhelm; "alas, my unhappy, my misguided father!"

"Your father!" repeated Rosalthe, flying towards him, and grasping his arm; "the Baron de Lindenthal your father! ah, name then your mother."

"Jacquilina, a guileless, injured maid, the daughter of an honest peasant, was the miserable mother of a guilty son."

Dusseldorf uttered an exclamation of surprise, and sunk pale and agitated on a chair, whilst Agatha, whose heart yearned to clasp her grandson, extended her arms; but from extreme joy and astonishment, was unable to move from the spot on which she stood.

"Look at that aged, that respected pair," said Rosalthe, softened into tears; "be-

hold the parents of Jacquilina thy mother. Kneel down, Wilhelm, and supplicate their blessing."

In an instant he was encircled in their arms, and his eyes bore testimony of his internal feelings.

"But my mother," he exclaimed, when returning composure admitted utterance, "my contrite, heart-broken mother."

"Lives," answered the veteran, "and lives in peace. Beneath St. Florensia's roof, the holy veil has long secreted her from the world; religion has purified her thoughts, and fixed them all on Heaven. She lives, my son, to bless and pray for thee."

"May I not see her?" eagerly enquired Wilhelm.

"She is now kneeling at the foot of the altar," returned the Lady Abbess; "when her devotions cease, it shall be my part to break to her the arrival of her long-lost,
but

but never-forgotten son. In the mean time, there is one," pointing to Rosalthe, "whose eyes betray impatience and anxiety."

"And another, holy mother," interrupted the Count de Rosencrantz, "who ardently wishes to know the providential means by which his beloved daughter has been released from a compulsory vow."

"Daughter!" repeated Wilhelm; "is not Rosalthe the child of Dusseldorf?"

"No, my son," replied the superior; "Rosalthe is the heiress of the Count de Rosencrantz."

The mystery was then explained, and Wilhelm, having poured forth his congratulations, commenced his recital—

"Dreadful were the imprecations of the Bandit, when, on his return to the cavern, he discovered the flight of his bride. His heavy curses reverberated through the

stony passages, and filled with terror and dismay the unconscious Bianca.

‘Where is Rosalthe?’ he vociferated; ‘where is my wedded bride?’ rushing to the outer cavern, and darting vengeance on the trembling dame.

‘Alas, alas, I know not,’ she faltered; ‘I will go and seek her.’

‘Seek her in hell!’ roared Hildebrand, drawing a pistol from his belt.

“The report, the shriek were alike instantaneous; for Bianca, a blackened corse, fell stumbling at his feet.”

“Holy Virgin!” ejaculated the horror-stricken Rosalthe.

‘Bear her hence,’ pursued the Bandit, ‘and bring hither the canting hypocrite who defied my power.’

“Poor Friar Lawrence!” exclaimed Rosalthe, bursting into tears.

‘Why

‘Why dost thou pause?’ continued Hildebrand; ‘look at the victim of my vengeance, and obey.’

“The body was taken from the chamber. I trembled for the holy father—I knew his steady courage—I knew the Bandit’s rage.

‘Hast thou searched well the interior of the cavern?’ I enquired, hoping by this means to divert his attention.

‘No, my friend; come, let us together,’ and a smile of exultation lightened his features.

‘Rosalthe, my heart’s treasure, thy proud unbending beauty may yet be mine.’

“As we threw open the door, Otho returned—‘We cannot move the monk,’ he exclaimed; ‘the pangs of death are on him; his strength is gone; he cannot stand.’

‘Let him lie then,’ replied the chief; ‘come, and aid us in our search.’

“I started when I beheld the trap-door open; I feared to descend, lest the poor trembling fugitive should be regained.

‘Bring hither a torch,’ said Hildebrand, hastening down the dark stairs.

“He spoke not; his eyes wandered eagerly around: suddenly springing forward, he snatched something from the earth.

‘Ah, ’tis the very ring with which I wedded her. Rosalthe, thou hast betrayed thyself.’

“His eyes flashed fury. At the extremity of the cavern, we found the extinguished lamp, but no other clue to guide us. The Bandit looked into the hollow through which the stream murmured: it was dark, but it was possible that Rosalthe might there have sought a shelter.

“The idea was sufficient. He entered; and when he returned—‘This passage leads to the beach,’ he exclaimed; ‘Rosalthe thinks to escape me, but she is mistaken. I will go to the cottage, and by force regain her.’

“We retraced our steps, and at night Hildebrand and part of his troop quitted
the

the cavern. No sooner were they gone, than I stole to the dungeon of the holy Lawrence. I took some cordials, in the hope of renovating the nearly exhausted flame of life. Alas, vain were my efforts! he was extended on the straw—his eyes closed, and his hands clasped in prayer. He smiled at the grim tyrant death; for inborn courage, fortitude, and faith, had gained so strong an empire in his pious soul, that, as the steady pole-star, firm to its destined point, he viewed the unerring dart, and hailed the rays of immortality.

‘Bless thy mercy, my son!’ he murmured, as his eyes rested on the cordials I endeavoured to administer; ‘how little does thy heart accord with thy pursuit!’

“I raised my hand to dash away the tear which stole down my cheek.

‘Forbear, forbear!’ he articulated; ‘wipe not away the precious drop of humanity; it is an offering for returning peace: oh, may I hail it from the blessed source of repentance! Wilt thou renounce
thy

thy associates? wilt thou renounce the ways of sin, and sue the meed of pardon?’

‘If I could—if I dared,’ I exclaimed.

‘Heaven sanctions the work, my son,’ interrupted the holy Lawrence; ‘save the unhappy girl now groaning under the unjust persecution of thy imperious chief; and, to the latest moment of thy life, in the reflection thy soul will experience comfort.’

‘Rosalthe has fled—Rosalthe has escaped his power,’ I replied.

‘Ah, Father of mercy, I thank thee!’ he faintly whispered; ‘yet, for thy eternal welfare,’ grasping my hand, and looking earnestly in my face, ‘shun not the voice of truth; remember guilt is the headlong path to perdition—remember its certain attributes are misery and woe.’

“His tone had become more internal, and his hands were damp and cold. Again I urged him to swallow the cordial, but he smiled at my efforts.

‘Death must come,’ he said; ‘why then shouldst

shouldst thou wish to protract the hour? why strive to put it off? To breathe a little longer the exhausted chalice of life's last dregs, are bitter—alas, at best, are tasteless and vapid. Yet ere I go,' he continued, 'one effort must be made. In youth I had a sister, whom I madly loved—that sister, alike unfortunate, married——'

The Abbess started, and gazed anxiously on Wilhelm.

'She had a daughter.'

"Holy Virgin!" murmured the superior.

'Through my imprudence that sister died. I renounced the world: I retired to a solitary cell near the castle in which she had resided, and buried the name of Hubert de Kronenfeld in that of Friar Lawrence.'

The

The Lady Abbess burst into tears, hid her face on the bosom of Rosalthe, and vainly strove to stifle her sobs. Wilhelm paused; but in compliance with her intreaties, again proceeded:—

‘ Adela, the cherished, virtuous child of that sister, loved, and was beloved by Leopold Count de Rosencrantz. I witnessed the struggles of their passion, pitied, and at length, in opposition to a tyrannic father, married them. But soon were the hapless pair swept from the world, and heard of no more. They left a child, but never could I learn its fate. If still in existence, a heavy mystery conceals it; and the searching power of Heaven can alone bring the dark transaction to light.

‘ Ere I quitted my hermitage to commence my pilgrimage, I left, in the charge of the Abbot of the Benedictine monastery, the certificate and credentials of their marriage, sufficient to establish the legitimacy of their orphan, whom my heart, from the
first

first moment I beheld her, acknowledged in Rosalthe.'

"He spoke no more. Powerless and exhausted, his eyes closed. I knelt by his side—I seized his hand.

'Bless me, holy Lawrence!' I murmured; 'bless, ere thou goest, a contrite sinner!'

"With a feeble effort, he pressed my hand, sighed the word 'bless,' and expired.

"My various attempts to escape from the banditti proved unsuccessful; and I was compelled, through many months, to conceal my abhorrence of their pursuit, to stifle my indignation.

"Hildebrand in vain struggled against the force of love: in vain he strove to lose reflection in the maddening bowl or midnight revel. His passion was not the result of the moment, or the attribute of beauty: he loved thee, Lady, with a fervour which would not have disgraced a nobler soul—with an adoration which defied the force of time, and mocked his efforts

efforts for freedom. Often did he gaze on the walls of St. Florensia—often, in the fury of despair, curse the power who protected thee, and threaten to fire the monastery, and regain his bride by force. The dread for thy safety alone withheld him. He pictured the possibility of losing thee in the flames, and instantly resigned the attempt. Joy beamed in his eyes, and hope dawned in his bosom, when he discovered thy removal to Lunenberg Castle.

‘Now that thou hast left that dark retreat, Rosalthe,’ he exultingly exclaimed, ‘heaven nor hell shall guard thee.’

“Spies were ever upon the watch, and thy unconscious footsteps marked. On the morning when the deep-laid scheme took effect—when, a second time, thou wert torn from the protection of thy friends, Cuthbert returned to the cavern, and announced the victim then in the charge of Otho. The delighted Hildebrand would have hastened to meet thee; but ere he reached the summit of the stairs,

Otho

Otho rushed through the trap-door, breathless with rage and disappointment.

‘To arms! to arms! death or Rosalthe!’ vociferated the Bandit, as he listened to his recital.

“In a few minutes the cavern was cleared, and I watched in fearful expectancy the event. In another hour the horn sounded. Trembling for thy fate, Lady, I answered the summons: but instead of beholding Hildebrand an exulting victor, and thou a reluctant captive by his side, I saw him pale, bleeding, senseless; and consternation and horror depicted on the countenances of his few remaining colleagues.

“Long was it ere with returning animation he opened his languid eyes—long was it ere the power of speech was restored! Alas, better had it never been; for he abused the blessing, by venting against Fate, against Heaven, the most blasphemous execrations. For many days he lingered; but pain awakened not repentance;

pentance; and last night, as the clock tolled twelve, breathing thy name, in a dreadful groan, he expired. I stood by his side—I gazed upon him—I thought of the mild, the pious Lawrence, and shuddered at the fate of Hildebrand. Fearful of detection, the only remaining four of the banditti, laden with ill-gotten treasure, this morning quitted the cavern; and I hastened to St. Florensia, to announce the freedom of the *Bandit's Bride*."

Wilhelm ceased; and as the hour of devotion was passed, the superior left the parlour, and presently returned, accompanied by Jacquilina. The nun gazed with maternal tenderness on her son, raised him from his knees, pressed him to her bosom, wept over, and blessed him: whilst Wilhelm, strengthened by her example, vowed in the fervor of his heart, to renounce for ever the power of temptation, by retiring from the world, and abiding in the peaceful hermitage of his counsellor and reformer, Friar Lawrence.

In

In six months from the deaths of the Baron de Lindenthal and the Bandit, in the chapel of St. Florensia's convent, a double marriage took place. In the presence of the Baron de Lunenberg, the Count de Rosencrantz, Dusseldorf, Agatha, and the Lady Abbess, Angela became the Baroness de Lindenthal, Rosalthe the Countess de Lunenberg—not poor and unportioned, but the rich and beloved heiress of the Count de Rosencrantz, whose estates had been restored, whose existence had been acknowledged. But Adelbert, whose love, founded on the certainty of her virtues, was pure and ardent, felt not a higher gratification than had he received from the hand of the peasant Dusseldorf, his humble, beauteous daughter.

The day, the long, the anxiously wished for day, was a day of rapture. Every heart in the hamlet dilated, through the munificence of the Baron. Agatha was the queen of the *fête*, and, as the good old veteran

veteran had once predicted, *lost not a bit of consequence*. Happiness reigned unequalled in their breasts, and joy and gladness knew no decay. Dusseldorf, gay and cheerful, might have fancied himself grown young, in the prosperity of his adopted child, had not the rheumatic spasm of age now and then hinted that man's vigour can bloom but once. Angela smiled upon the Lady Abbess, and, pressing her hand—"Mother," she exclaimed, "how often hast thou told me that happiness existed in anticipation! I was always incredulous, but now I am more so than ever."

"Mayest thou ever have cause to say so, my child!" replied the superior; "Virtue is the offspring of Heaven, and her votaries are its peculiar care!"

Rosalthe, the Countess de Lunenberg, uninfluenced by pride, unbiassed by greatness, lived a pattern of modest worth—the treasure of an adoring husband—the delight of a tender father. Often did she
visit

visit the cottage which had sheltered her in the moment of affliction, and pass whole hours with the aged protectors of her youth—the long-acknowledged parents of her affection: and the serene, the unclouded happiness she enjoyed, soon chased from memory the bitter sorrows of the *Bandit's Bride*.

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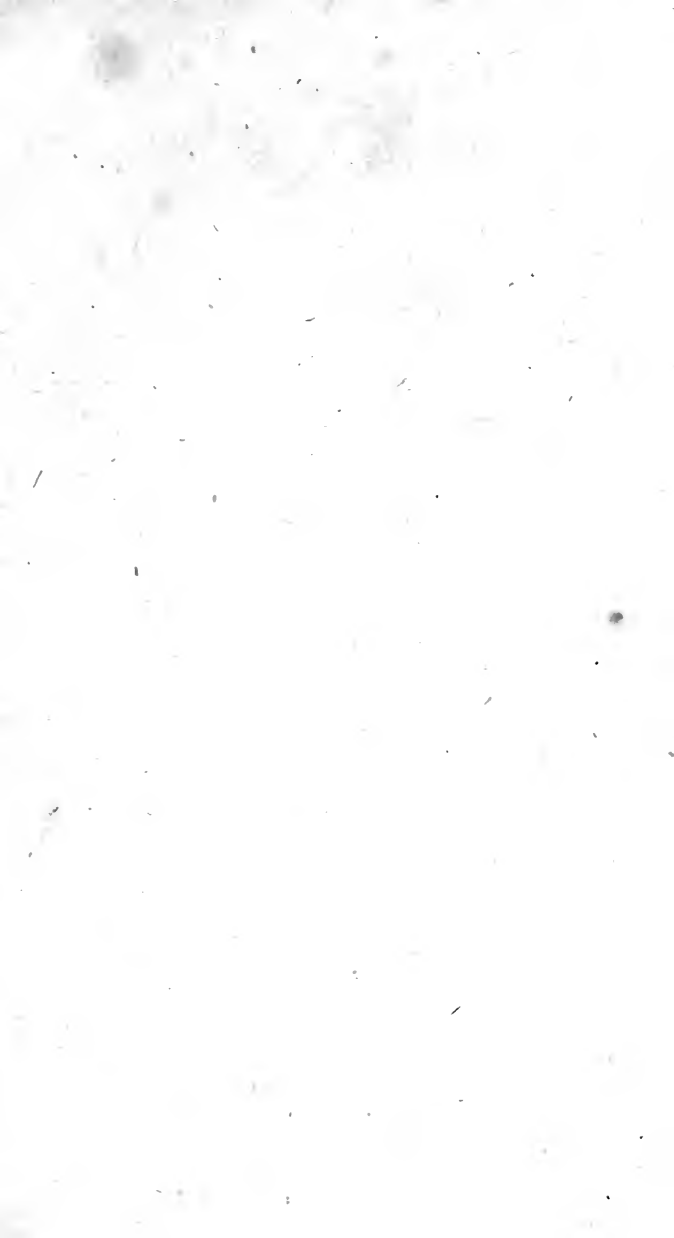
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